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WHAT BOOZE BROUGHT

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CHAPTER I.

YES, I'd been a fool. The more fool, that there had been no excuse. With money and education, to have come to this! Don't think that I spared myself when I awoke in the berth of that coaster, my throat crying for drink and a sickening ache in my head. Yes, friend, drink. Drink was the reason why Jeffrey Carlton, a college graduate, shipped as a deck-hand on a coaster, bound for Boston, out of Charleston. Boston or the devil, what did I care? It mattered not the flip of a coin where I was bound. It had taken me six years to slide the drink toboggan. I was ready for the finish.

I little liked the looks of the mate, or the way he damned me out of my bunk and on deck; nor the surly, bull-necked brute of a skipper. Well, I'd keep a civil tongue in my head, if they'd not stir the devil in me.

The cargo was lumber, with holds loaded to the hatches and piled upon deck until the scuppers shipped water with every lunge. The schooner was making the headway of a turtle; I could place her in a storm, with decks a-wash. A nice mess I'd made of things. If I was bound for the devil, why not go in style? Not in some old mud-scow of a coaster.

But here I was, and my main concern was for a drink to quench the raging thirst within. I spoke the mate fair. He was some sort of a compound of a half-breed, with the feelings of an imp of hell.

"Drink? Drink? Blast ye, do ye think this is a bar? Skipper, I say, Captain Martin, he wants a drink! Is it wine ye'd like, now?"

The rage was in me to kill the man, but I wanted that drink as much as ever I wanted anything in this world, and I held my hand.

"Come aft," roared the skipper.

Ah, you don't know to what depths a man will fall, friend, when he'll take the bullyragging of a man like the skipper of that coaster for the sake of a drink. I went aft, the mate who answered to the name of Stalls, following, a devilish leer on his lips. I'd get him yet.

"Say, looker here, you," shouted the skipper. "You don't get anything to drink on this ship. What we want outer you is work. Forget the drink; you had enough shipped when you came

aboard to last the trip. Now get for-rd."

And to take this from a bleary-eyed, red-nosed, whisky-smelling scamp! I say again, friend, you don't know to what depths a man will fall.

The coaster was one of those two-masted schooners, such as you'll see hundreds like, in the course of a year in any harbor. Weather-beaten, rotten in joint and seam, patched sails and mended spars.

She carried a crew of six, the skipper, mate, cook and three deck-hands. The cook was a Portuguese called Pete. The deck-hands were a Swede, Johnson by name, a nigger boy that answered to the hail of Marse, and Jeffrey Carlton, the college graduate and one-time leader of cotillions.

The skipper was the owner; the schooner was some old hulk of a salvage he'd bought for the price of a talking, the Swede, Johnson, said. The Swede had sailed with him before, and from him I learned that the skipper made a cruise one long debauch; that it was the mate who was the real sailor; then, from out his dunnage kit, the Swede had taken a bottle and given me a drink.

Ah, friend, the nectar of the gods! The waters of life that Ponce de Leon sought could scarcely be worthy of one-half the equal of that fiery corn whisky, after that watch with the mate and the heavy watch with the mate.

What I knew about sea work you could roll in your hand and blow away with a puff of your breath. But with the sarcastic instructions of the mate, and the sickness within me, I was ready for most anything. And I was ready when my hunk that first day. But the drink had made a new man of me. I could feel the blood pulsating within my veins and a sense of peace steal over me.

I wasn't a wreck yet, not by a long shot, although it was no fault of mine that I wasn't. My athletic training at college and my one hundred and two hundred and thirty pounds on a six-foot frame, had taken the ravages with hardly showing.

I tell you, friend, I was sick of it. An utter disgust of myself predominated. There was an end to it, I told myself I didn't care, as I lay there in the bunk listening to the swish-swish of the water against the sides of the schooner. But deep down in my heart, I did care. I had been born a gentleman, and a gentleman I would be. Could I come back? That question I laid away to be answered at some future time. Here it was, so much to do, so much of it.

And I fully intended to, friend. I'd take the words and commands of those brutes one by one if I had to choke myself to do it.

We beat along up the coast, through Delaware Bay and into the smooth seas. Smooth as the sea, the swell was there to work its sickness on lubbers like me. And sick I was, so sick that I would have me out and on my watch, his sarcastic tongue venting fresh insult and indignity.

The skipper I saw little of. Once or twice, maybe, a day he'd crawl to the deck, and blearily and with a cursory look out some order to the luckless man at the wheel, then disappear again down the companion hatch.

The ship was run between the mate and the Swede deck-hand, with all, including Pete, cook, doing what trick at the wheel. It was two weeks before the mate would give me my trick; weeks in which he was to me all and the names of a landlubber; weeks in which the safety valve of my temper was always the open.

It was one afternoon, when we were somewhere between Cape Hatteras and Cape Cod, Massachusetts, that the water-soaked hulk we were, that I took the wheel.

"And see if ye can steer to the wind, ye rubber-brained idiot. For the price of a drink, we could have had the pick of yer betters."

The mate seemed to take a special delight in thus baiting me. Whether he'd gotten me in a corner, no matter little. It might have been he thought me a fool. If I was, it was not in his way of thinking.

"Yer a surly creature, ye are; when yer betters address ye, ye do not speak," continued the mate.

"Betters?" I muttered. "Betters be damned!"

"What's that?" he shouted as he sprang toward me.

The fat was in the fire, my temper had me, and I was at him before he had time to land with his clinched fist. He toppled from the blow on the chin and went sprawling against the deck, which as luck would have it, was closed to keep out the fierce rays of the July sun.

Recovering quickly he picked a leaden caulking-hook that had been used to store the lumber, and raising it above his head rushed toward me, murder in his eyes.

I'd learned a trick in France, and as the mate reached me and the weight descended toward my head, I leaped to one side and planted my foot squarely in his stomach. He dropped like a log, the caulking-hook rolling clatteringly against the cabin, bringing the soggy captain to the deck, with the cook and the deck-hands on the run aft. The Swede was the first to reach my side.

"He ban kill you," he said, indicating the mate. "Look out—had man."

The skipper appeared at this moment from the cabin.

"What's all this row? he demanded. "So it's ye, is it? I'll have to tend to ye before long, me man."

I little liked the gleam in his eye, or the way in which his fingers sneaked about his pockets. But I was at the point where ten men like him couldn't have held me.

"Look here, you Martin," I cried. "You keep that cutthroat of a mate off me the rest of this voyage, or I'll not answer for the consequences. He attacked me, I've defended myself. The next time I'll make a clean job of it." I was beside myself with rage at the man.

"So, that is it, is it? Ye talk like that to me, me man? Fer two cents, I'd shoot ye and throw yer worthless carcass overboard. And who's to stop me?" he demanded, as he paced to and fro. "Who's to stop me? Ain't I skipper, ain't I? Get for'rd, now, I'll settle yer hash later," he threatened. "Ye're under arrest. Get down to the fo'k'sl."

I'd make a mess of things. They had me in their power. How could I prevent them from getting me before I reached Boston?

I backed away from the skipper. I knew he had a gun, and there was a great temptation to a cowardly man.

For two days I staid in my bunk in the fo'k'sl, the Swede, Johnson, faithfully bringing me rations twice a day. I tell you, friend, I was in as fine a rage as a man can be and live. But I was, in what could I do? I might jump overboard. Yet, I wasn't looking to commit suicide yet, not by a long shot.

The Swede told me, when he came off watch that day, that the mate had recovered from his fall, and had sworn me to be on the lookout for the man. I was alone in the fo'k'sl most of the time. This gave me a thought, not having heard from the skipper or mate, and warned me to be on my guard.

It was very early morning, hours of the third day that I had been below, when of a sudden, I was awakened from my sleep as I lay in my bunk. I knew that trick of awaking when some one nears me. For a moment I could see nothing by the light of the smoky burning lantern. I lay still, without a movement. The sound came from the hatch, the creak of a board it might have been. Not daring to move my head, I strained my eyes downward. My hunk was a lower one. Into the range of my visions came a creeping body.

I tell you, friend, for the moment fear numbed me. I was like a hypnotized animal! I could think of no way in which to save myself. That it was the mate I felt sure. And his purpose I could divine.

Slowly the figure crept nearer the bunk. Slowly, with a horrible fascination. A plan began to form in my mind. Whether it would be successful or not, I could only attempt.

With a spring the crouched figure raised itself to full height, and lunged forward toward me. I caught him to me lifted hand as it descended, with a wrench that caused the mate, for it was he, to drop the club. We rolled out with pain. As I twisted the arm I wormed myself from the bunk to the floor. There I flung him off.

For a moment he paused, then rushed at me, his face contorted with fury. Pool that I was, I allowed him to grapple. I tell you, the man was strong. Long unused muscles of mine came into play. We wrestled back and forth, stumbling over boxes and dunnage chests. His hand reached for my throat, but I had the hold I wanted, and with a twist I threw him.

The mate landed in a heap near my bunk, his outstretched hand coming in contact with the knife I had made him drop. I lost my balance from the force of the throw, stumbled over a box and went headlong to the floor.

A wicked gleam came into the mate's eyes, his hand grasped the knife from off the floor and he made on his knees toward me.

TO LEDGER READERS

Don't fail to read the strong sea story in this issue, entitled, "WHAT 'BOOZE' BROUGHT; or, BRAWN AND THE BLUE BRINE." It is a thriller. Look out next week for "KING OF THE WORLD; or, THE GREAT WAR'S END." It is a strange story of how an American inventor forced the nations to cease war. Read it sure. It will be followed by a most interesting story of the great Northwest, entitled, "AT POST O'-PERIL; or, THE BLACK BEAVER TREASURE," a corker for love and adventure. Boy readers, be sure and keep taking the Ledger so you can read two splendid new stories, called, "SCHOOLBOY SOLDIERS; or, SAVING THE NATION," and "WASHINGTON BOY SCOUTS; or, BEATING THE SECRET SIX." They are dandy yarns. Don't miss them.

CHAPTER II.

THE long hot, summer afternoon was drawing to a close and perspiring millions of humanity sighed relief. The summer colony of Hatham, on Cape Cod, sat on verandas in negligee and discomfort, or lounged on beaches in discomfort and a little more negligee, or baked and broiled faces and shoulders in the water. The few yachts in the snug harbor, sheltered by the jutting strip of land that ran well out into the Atlantic, rolled and bobbed in the sea swell. Summer cottages dotted the shore at all points, and along the jutting strip of land at the far end stood a stately pile of stone, round and painted white, with its tall, slim, pointed finger flashes of light for the mariner's warning. Nestled at the foot of the lighthouse was the keeper's cottage, which, what resembled a large stovepipe projecting, which was wont to emit guttural rumblings in bad weather.

On the high hill, upon this jutting strip of land, stood a picturesque summer cottage of stone and red brick. Wide verandas ran the entire front of the house. In front a winding path led to the foot of the hill, where a wharf nosed out into the water.

A girl was seated in a swing hammock, upon a veranda of the house, this summer afternoon, endeavoring to read. Even here, situated as it was to catch every breath of air that blew from the ocean, it was hot and uncomfortable. Vessels could be seen off shore, with sails flapping idly in the light breeze, that barely carried to land, stirring the hot waves along the beach and distributing them among the suffering humanity.

At last with a gesture of weariness, the girl tossed the book she had been trying to read on the veranda rail. She stood there facing the sea, a pair of bright hazel eyes indolently watching the distant sails.

The sun shone upon the fine brown hair, turning it into gold and upon her face, accenting the creamy whiteness of her cheeks. In years, one would say she was eighteen, in form perfect as to outline of face.

Tied to the wharf at the foot of the hill was moored a launch and tender and a rowboat. As though impressed with a quick determination, the girl suddenly picked up the book she had cast aside and ran lightly down the winding path, the skirt of her blue sailor suit fluttering about her knees. On the wharf she went, and clambered into the launch, where she curled upon a cushion in the cabin and composed herself to read.

The launch strained at the light hawser wound about an iron upon the dock, the ebbing tide each moment adding to the strain upon the tugging rope. The sun dipped in the west, among a riot of orange colorings and purple hues. A breeze sprang up with the setting sun.

Tug-tug went the hawser. The launch bumped against the dock, suddenly freed from its moorings. Still bobbing, made off with the ebbing tide, toward the open sea.

Dusk settled. The girl tired with the long weary day, had fallen asleep, the book upon the floor beside her. Somehow the settling night roused her, or it may have been her inner consciousness warning her of danger, for she awoke suddenly. She sat upright, her eyes and looked out the cabin window.

The unfamiliar location was at first a shock to her. Could she be still be dreaming? All about her was the open sea, far back on her left, was the lighthouse, and still nearer, was the glow of the lamp visible in the rapidly deepening gloom. Like some playhouse, her launch rested against the sea.

Hurriedly the girl arose and ran to the bow of the launch. The dangling hawser told the story. She realized she was adrift. But then she laughed. Why, it would be a small matter to start the engine and run back to the harbor before night overtook her. She had learned to run the launch from the man in the boat hastily she went to the engine and cranked it. It sputtered and started. She smiled and going to the wheel, headed her craft toward the lighthouse. The motor made some dozen revolutions then came to a sputtering stop.

She examined the engines and peered into the tank. The tank was empty. Gasoline must be one of the supplies on board. A hurried search revealed nothing but two empty cans.

The full realization of her danger came upon her. Adrift at night, in the path of steamers and sailing vessels. But worse than that was her hope. They would see and rescue her.

The darkness had fallen now black and heavy. She could turn on the electric lights in the cabin. Somehow, these lights took away much of her fear and made her feel more safe and secure.

Would she be missed at home? Then she smiled bitterly. No, that there was no one at home but the servants, her mother and aunt having gone for a visit to the mountains. And hence they would not return before ten that night.

But some one must have seen the launch leave the harbor. True, there had been several who saw the launch as she left the harbor with the ebbing tide.

Numerous cottagers had made surmises as to the probable identity of Loneley launch, but with no intimation of the real predicament. The old lighthouse keeper watched the launch, her swinging rudder keeping her in an apparently straight course. He had remarked to his wife:

"Those dratted engines never work when they're wanted to," and had watched the launch from small upon the water, with a sense of troubled doubt.

Then as he had stood out on the balcony of the lighthouse, there had been borne to him the faint "chug-chug" of the engine. Dismissing all misgivings as the sound, he had put the matter from his mind. Mr. Loneley must have come down from Boston and was bound on some pleasure trip up the coast.

And it was there with the black wall of night enveloping her was Alice Loneley, the only daughter of the man who's firm stood as high as any among the moneyed interests of Boston, drifting she knew not where.

CHAPTER III.

THERE I was, friend, sprawled upon the floor, the murderous gleam of the knife upon me. He had me. He was on his knees now, and in another second would be at me. But where was I now?

I surmised rightly that the Portuguese cook, Pete, and the negro, Marse, would side with the mate; there was only Johnson to count on, and I doubted if he would interfere.

With a low growl and the lips of the wolf, Sully brought himself to his toes and prepared to spring toward me. Against my outstretched hand I felt the legs of the overturned stool. In a flash I had made my plan, and even as the mate leaped I hurled the stool full at his head. He saw it and ducked, and the stool went past him, and, with a crash of splintering glass, the lantern dropped to the floor.

Instinctively I rolled to one side and as I did so, felt the impact of the mate's body against mine, and felt blood gush from a wound in the shoulder made by his knife.

"Devil, you," I heard him pant. "There!" Again the knife descended and grazed my arm.

With a mighty effort, I squirmed myself free from his clutch and in a half, raised position on my left arm, struck out with my right to the darkness at the point where I thought his face should be.

My fist came in contact with his head and as he fell back I was on my feet and groping for the ladder. Once on deck we could finish it. I had no relish for close-quarter fighting in the dark, unarmed.

The mate clutched at me as I brushed by, and the star-lighted sky showed against the open hatch, and with a bound I was on deck, and in a second had shut and hooked the hatch cover

A moment after came the beating of the mate's fists against the wood.

The negro Marsa sat upon the lumber in the waist of the schooner, clasping his knees in apparent sleep. The Swede must be at the wheel. Where the Portuguese, Pete, was, I did not know.

A daring plan came to my mind. Running after over the wet piled-up lumber on the deck, I startled the Swede at the wheel. Hastily I explained to him what I intended to do. He shook his head in doubt. But I was amuck now, and I turned and crept down the companionway to the skipper's cabin.

In a chair drawn up to this table, with his head buried in his arms, was the cook, Pete. An empty gin bottle stood before him. From the room to the right off the main cabin came the heavy breathing of the skipper.

I'd had my clew. Noiselessly I walked toward the skipper's cabin and entered. It was only a partitioned-off bunk, the space being hardly four feet wide. The light in the main cabin showed what I was after, the skipper's coat, tossed over a chair. I plunged my hands in the pockets and drew out from one the revolver with which the skipper had threatened me. Was it loaded? Yes. Searching I found beneath the bunk in his dunnage chest a box of cartridges.

Walking back into the cabin I leaned over the cook. Drunk, him also. He only muttered unintelligibly. Again I shook him, roughly this time. Dead to the world. Now for the mate. He'd not have me at a disadvantage now. I showed the revolver to the Swede at the wheel as I ran past him and heard his muttered exclamation. As I reached the foks'l hatch the negro was working at the hasp.

"Drop that," I commanded and thrust the revolver before his face.

He jumped away, his eyes rolling with fear.

"Look here, Sully." I called out. "I'm going to let you out, and if you want to fight fair and square, well and good. But if you attempt any tricks I'll pump you full of lead. You'll keep your distance the rest of this trip or you'll take a quick shuffle."

The mate took my words for bravado, for he unfastened the hasp and slid the cover back he sprang from the ladder with a rush as though to take me by surprise. This was a surprise, but it was on the mate's part, as he saw the dim outline of the revolver in my hands.

For a moment his rage mastered him, and it seemed that not even the gun would hold him back. But the gun is a powerful argument, especially when in the hands of a determined man, and I was all of these. With a maul of rage the mate wheeled and slunk aft, followed by the negro Marsa.

I entered the mate's cabin after the skipper's gun, and had an unpleasant discovery ahead of him. I felt sure I had thrown gun on the boat. But there would be trouble ahead, and with three against one I anticipated plenty of excitement for the rest of the trip. Well, I'd made my bed, I'd lie in it. Maybe it would be the last excitement I'd ever have.

It was some ten minutes later that the mate came over the lumber in the waist, accompanied by the skipper, whom he had aroused from his drunken slumber. I could see them coming; the light was just breaking in the eastern sky.

"Say, ye," the skipper bellowed, accompanying the words with a choice collection of waterfront oaths, "ye mutinous swabber, ye robber! Wait 'till I have my gun. Mutiny aboard on the skipper and mate. I'll have ye sent up for life, ye—"

"If that's all you've got to say——" I turned my back on them and started to walk away.

For a moment the skipper struggled to suppress his rage. "Come back here, ye," he shouted. "It's the gun we want. Give over the gun, and we'll not trouble ye."

Give over the gun to the skipper! Did he think for a fool? I could not suppress a mocking laugh as I walked away, their curses following me.

I sat on the companionway or mate the rest of the day. They would have sent me from the mess, but I beat them to it, and found time to slip into the galley and appropriated a generous piece of corned beef and a can of biscuits and carried them to the companionway. I remained the rest of the day undisturbed.

I knew I would have to keep awake for the rest of the trip. Could I do it? It would be my only hope of escaping attack.

Where we were I had no idea, except from what I had heard from a chance remark of the mate to the man at the wheel. Somewhere off the Massachusetts coast, he figured in a day or two. That was on the day which he attacked me.

I had stanched the wound in my shoulder made by the mate's knife. It was not so deep as I had supposed. More blood than wound. It pained me, though. In a dull throbbing way, and I figured that the pain would be a good antidote for sleep. The wound on my arm was little more than a scratch, and did not bother me.

All that day the skipper and mate palavered near the wheel. By their frequent glances in my direction, I knew that they were plotting to outwit me. Well, we'd see what another day brought forth.

That night the mate had as little rest as I, for he prowled the deck and the lumber-laden waist, forever on the watch for an opportunity, which he never received.

During the following day I made another raid on the cook's larder, and, while the mate was below, managed to secure a series of short naps.

The Swede, Johnson, had kept away from me, as had the rest of the crew. I could not blame Johnson; he feared the mate.

That night, pain or no pain, my eyes would close in spite of my utmost will to keep them open. The mate was not on deck the first part of the night, for I kept a sharp watch, as I paced back and forth in the narrow space of the bow. Once or twice I found myself nodding, as I walked, but I'd start, thinking I had conquered my inclination to sleep, and seeing no signs of the mate or the deck-hands in the forward part of the boat, I seated myself on a coil of rope.

I must have fallen asleep at once, for I remember nothing until I awoke to find the mate, the negro Marsa, and the cook upon me all at once. My arms were pinned to my side; I could guess my finish.

Then as I waited, each moment expecting to feel the thrust of a knife through my flesh, there came a loud cry of alarm from the man at the wheel.

With a muttered oath the mate sprang to his feet and ran to the side of the schooner.

CHAPTER IV.

EVEN as the situation asserted itself upon Alice Longley's mind there came with it a gleam of hope. She was in the track of steamers and sailing vessels, and that she could long remain adrift without being sighted and rescued from her predicament did not seem possible.

She turned on the button for the electric sailing lights, and seated herself at the wheel in the foreward part of the cabin.

That the boat was drifting off shore, the compass told her. For this she was thankful in a way, for the shore was dangerous with its reefs and rocky, outjutting ledges. It was with a shudder that her mind conjured the picture of the launch's doom if it should drift toward those treacherous reefs.

Far off to her left she could discern the flashing eye of some lighthouse. What lighthouse she did not know, as she had lost all sense of land or distance, with the lull of night about her.

Suddenly from somewhere ahead, came a low, dark hulk, a sailing vessel, with her canvas showing weirdly against the sky. It passed so near that she could hear the shout of the man at the wheel, then the ship slid by and away into the night.

The cold chill of the night crept into the cabin, causing the girl to shiver. From the floor she took a rug and wrapped it about her shoulders for protection. Peering intently into the darkness from the cabin windows, on the crest of a wave, she saw far off to the north, a twinkling light, which, as it steadily approached, resolved itself into a gleam of many small lights. Passing far astern, the girl made out the outlines of a steamer by the lights. Sound steamer for New York, she thought.

The launch had been built to withstand heavy seas, and equipped with a strong engine. Built to original designs furnished by Mr. Longley, who had no need of practicing economy, it was furnished with every luxury that the size of the boat would permit, including a gasoline cooking range and a well stocked larder.

Bunks had been built in along the cabin, which could be converted into separate rooms by cleverly arranged partitions of wood, which folded up out of the way when not in use. This idea had been adopted from the Pullman sleepers. Throughout, the launch was wired for electric lights, which were charged from storage batteries.

A full supply of nautical instruments had been provided, not that Mr. Longley had ever deemed it necessary, or that they would ever be used, but to furnish his boat with everything that he might by any possibility need.

The wheel-house stood a trifle raised from the main cabin, from which it was separated by a glass door, which could be closed at will, thus shutting out the noise of the engine from those in the cabin. Everything about the launch showed the care and pride that Mr. Longley had taken to make it the best of its kind, as befitted a man of his position.

The breeze that had been blowing since sundown in fitful gusts, had increased to a steady blow, and the clouds which had obscured the sky had drifted off to the horizon, thinning and disappearing into the blue, vaulted dome, where the moon shone like a silver disk.

Each succeeding hour had diminished the girl's hopes of rescue. She well knew that when her disappearance should be discovered every means would be exerted to trace and rescue her. The launch must have been seen leaving the harbor, she reasoned. This might furnish a clew to those who sought her, and she knew her father, once he was sure she was adrift on the launch, would waste no time in going to her assistance.

With these thoughts the girl comforted herself and stilled the growing anxiety in her mind. Looking at her watch, she found the time to be a few minutes after twelve.

Lower and lower sunk the moon, until at last it disappeared and storm clouds mustered their forces and swept over and obscured the sky. A feel of rain opened into the air.

The launch rose and fell on the waves, at one moment high on the crest of a swell, the next sliding to hollow depths, only to be caught on the next swell to rise again. With her hand on the wheel the girl held the launch to one point, as best she could.

The steady monotony of each rise and plunge of the launch, the mental worry, caused the girl's eyes to close in weariness, her head to sag forward upon her bosom. Recovering from one lapse of consciousness, only to fall into a sleep more profound, her hand slipped from the wheel and she sank back from the stool behind her, her body swaying with every motion of the boat.

Then into this uneasy sleep there obtruded a cry, weird, startling, a cry of warning, that caused the girl to start and spring to her feet and to stand with heaving bosom, fear and horror in her eyes, as she saw through the cabin window, looming bulk, not ten feet away that bore down upon the launch.

He dropped like a log.

CHAPTER V.

LET me tell you, friend, to find yourself helpless in the hands of three men is no pleasant sensation. I thought they had me.

It had been Johnson's cry that had caused the mate to release his hold and spring to the side of the ship. What was the cause of the shouted warning I did not know, but with the mate gone, I threw off the negro and the cook with an ease that must have made them wonder at my strength.

As I sprang to my feet I felt for the revolver in my pocket. It was still there, and I pulled it forth and covered the two men.

The mate was running to and fro on the lumber, bellowing forth commands to the Swede at the wheel and toward some approaching object that seemed to be bearing down upon the schooner, side on.

It was a yacht or launch by the outlines, and it seemed that those on board were helpless to avert the collision that was imminent. Then as I looked I saw a form appear from the wheel-house forward and wave its arms frantically, as for help.

I sent the cook and the negro about their business and they skulked off to where the mate now stood at the rail on the side of the approaching boat.

"I'm adrift! Help!" came a voice from the boat, which was so close now that I could make out that it was the form of a woman, standing at the bow, one hand grasping the railing that ran about the wheel-house.

I saw the mate spring to the rail and grasp the rigging with one hand, while with the other he cast a light rope toward the oncoming boat.

"Catch it," he cried. "Make fast."

The rope had been thrown true, for it landed on the deck of the boat and was slipping astern as the girl caught it. A moment later it was fastened to the end, with the help of the two sailors the mate, drew the boat in toward the schooner's side.

The skipper came stumbling forward in the dark.

"What's all this row?" he demanded of the mate.

At this moment the boat struck the side of the schooner, and for the support of the iron rail the woman would have been thrown into the sea by the shock.

"Make fast, ye," roared the mate to the negro and the cook, and as they tightened the rope about a stanchion he wound one arm about the rattlines, and, leaning far out, grasped the girl's hand and called to her that she was only Sully's strength that brought the girl to the schooner in safety.

Directing the men to drop the boat astern, the mate turned to the skipper, whose question had gone unanswered. The mate's words as they talked in whispers. One word I caught of their conversation—"salvage."

This girl was adrift at their whispered talk, and the reason for the trouble that the mate had gone to in rescuing the girl from the launch for it was a girl, as I saw now, who with hair loosened and blowing about her face, stood confusedly on the lumber, not knowing to which of the men she should express her thanks for the rescue.

"Are you the captain?" she asked at length of the mate, as he turned away from the skipper.

"I'm the captain, miss," said that person, stepping forward, a leer upon his face.

"I—thank you for your help," she said. There was something about her voice that stirred me. "I have drifted from Haiham in the launch. Could you put me ashore, please? I will see you are well repaid for your trouble."

It was the captain who replied. "We are bound for Boston, miss. Won't that do now? We can take ye there. This launch o' mine do go some."

"It belongs to my father," the girl answered simply.

"Come aft to the cabin, miss. Ye shall have me own room for the rest of the trip. It's an honor, miss, to give up to the ladies," he added with a grin toward the mate at the girl's protests.

"And what might your father's name be, now?" he asked as he walked away aft.

The cook, Pete, had been aboard the launch and had fastened the tow rope, and the boat dropped astern. He passed me now as I stood there beside the rail, undecided what to do next. I could hear him muttering beneath his heavy mustache, cursing some one in broken English and his own native. He walked off toward the after-deck.

I tell you, friend, I little relished the idea of being off on a cruise in the hands of two such ruffians as I knew the skipper and mate to be. But I reasoned that their only interest at present was the girl for a while at least, and that she would be reasonably safe until we had reached Boston.

She probably looked upon these men as rough, but, like the other seamen she had known, protected by womanhood in distress. Little did she know the class of water rats to which the skipper and the mate belonged. She could only be through cupidity that she would receive their protection, not through any reminder of honor that might present for her plight.

Well, she wouldn't want for one friend anyway, if I could keep myself out of the mate's clutches, and I crept aft and lay outstretched on the deck, beside the cabin.

The mate was talking with the Swede at the wheel. I could feel now and then the spray of rain in my face. Off in the west the clouds streaked with lightning and there came the rumble of thunder.

The mate took the wheel and, with an order to shorten sail, sent the Swede and the cook scurrying forward. The wind was freshening and the schooner was rolling heavily.

Then from the cabin companion there suddenly silence.

I crept forward toward the hatch. The mate's attention was fixed and on the billying canvas. I reached the after-deck unobserved and crept to the cabin hatch and down the ladder. I did not care whether I was seen by the mate or not, nor did I know what I should do when I first reached the cabin. My one thought was to protect the girl.

A reddish glare met my sight as I reached the cabin floor. A lamp swung on a head came within the cabin. The table in the center was a mass of flames, as was the woodwork to the back, along which tiny tongues of fire licked greedily at the rotten wood.

Then I heard a woman's shriek of terror and turned to see the girl in the doorway of the skipper's room, gazing at me with horror and fright in her eyes.

CHAPTER VI.

THERE was a commotion on deck. Then there appeared the legs of the mate as he descended the ladder backward.

"What in——" he began, then stopped at the sight of the flames and the girl.

"Take the wheel, ye," he roared out to me. "Ye, there," to the commander of the girl, then as she hesitated in terror he roughly thrust her toward the ladder. "Up on deck, and be handsome about it! I followed the girl to the deck and took the wheel as I had been commanded.

"I could have sworn I heard a shot, Martin!" There was no reply that I heard, and in a moment the mate came with a rope's end. There was a cloud of smoke and flames following.

"Ye scut," he shouted as he came toward me. "Overboard the girl with a rope that'll be around yer neck for this job." Then before I could make reply, he made a lunge for me and again bellowed to the crew forward: "Aft ye, on the run, ye, on the run!"

The flames burst from the cabin at this moment through the roof of the cabin with the force of an explosion, and there followed a shower of sparks on the mainsail. Whipping a knife from his pocket the mate slashed at the ropes that held the boom with a stroke and the boom went swinging out with the wind.

Too late though, for the flames were already licking up the rotten patched canvas. In a moment fire was darting across ropes toward the foremast, and when the crew came running aft at the command of the mate the ship appeared doomed.

The cabin was one mass of flames now, and their heat had driven us all forward to the waist of the schooner. There was nothing with which to fight the fire; the pump was useless.

The crew were unlashing a dory that stood suspended from davits, cutting at the ropes with their knives. The mate, with coarse oaths issuing from his mouth, was urging the men to some action. But his words fell on unheeding ears, for fear was tugging at their hearts. He struck out with the knife in bellow of a wild animal the big Swede rushed him, picked him up in his arms as though he were a child, and tossed him insensible to the deck.

Where was the skipper, I wondered? The events had transpired so quickly that I had given him no thought. Could he have perished in that seething mass of flames that now reached the cabin and the blaze and arrive in time to take us off. Then suddenly I thought of the girl. I turned toward the after-deck.

Was it still astern, I wondered, or had the tow rope been burned? The heat from the flames was so intense that there would be only one way in which to reach the girl, I had been told, and to the stern rail. I lowered myself over the rail and with the fire blistering my hands slowly lowered myself astern. One look I gave to the rear. Some black object followed the erratic movements of the launch over the waves. Out of the fire I made out the lines of the launch.

The rope still held, then. At last I reached it and yanked at the knot with one hand; for one moment I drew myself forward to rest the other arm, the strain on my arms, but the intense heat drove me back again to the shelter of the rail.

In that journey back to the waist of the schooner, hampered by the dragging of the rope, and my hands and feet the fearful strain on my arms, I tell you, friend, I fought many times the temptation to drop the rope and cast myself down into the cool water at my feet.

There was another danger. The swinging boom might at any moment bear down and demolish the launch with any change of the wind. But I reached the waist of the ship in safety, and with hands that seemed blazing with fire drew myself up to the deck.

The mate was there and grasped the rope. I knew that he was too weak for the moment to protest, and he hauled the boat in close to the schooner's side. Then I saw that the girl had been aboard and left the two of us to our fate I do not know, but whatever his intentions were he had no idea of trusting to him, and I sprang forward, armed with a new strength and ranged myself beside him.

"The girl first!" I shouted.

With a snarl that bared his teeth he turned on me. Then whipped off a piece of hanging rope at his feet with his knife, and with a quick movement wound it about the girl, who had stood, frightened beyond speech at all that had transpired. With a dexterous knot he tied it.

I'd grasped the rope that ran to the launch when the mate had dropped it. "Jump for it," he sneered in my ear. "Jump for the boat, ye," he commanded the girl. "Jump, or I'll throw you in!" And as though in a dream the girl climbed to the rail and with a frightened gasp jumped for the deck of the launch. I saw the end of the rope about her body now, the end of which the mate held.

But there was no need of the rope for the girl made the deck in the jump, for a moment retained her feet. Then she fell to her knees and clutched at the rail.

Before I knew what he intended, the mate sprang to the rail and leaped, landing beside the girl. I still held the end of the tow-rope in my hand, I stepped to the rail and followed the mate, then I saw he had bent down and was working at the tow rope with his knife.

I sprang forward and reached the deck of the launch at the moment the rope fell in the water and the launch veered away from the schooner's side. Then my feet struck the rail of the launch and I toppled backward into the water.

The rest of this highly interesting story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. Read it. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year.

HE CAPITULATED

"What! Another new dress?" stormed Popslinger, as his daughter nonchalantly made her request. "Why, you had one not more than a minute ago!"

"Not very new, dad," she said daughter, "I haven't had a new thing since—why, not for ages!"

"One minute ago!" repeated Popslinger, firmly. "The younger generation is going to the dogs! When your mother and I were young, the girls had two new dresses a year—a calico one and a woolen one—and they looked just as pretty and had as many beaux as you extravagant young things now! They though of something else besides running their poor old father into bankruptcy! You get a new dress and here it is twice somebody who is envious of it sniffs and then you say it's perfectly hideous and you would die rather than be seen in that disreputable old rag again!"

"It's all because you have been allowed to read novels where the Lady Ermentrude Gewhilikens trails her pale satin gowns recklessly over the dewy turf and claims her fairyliike shape to match when she steals out on the gold-plated terrace to meet the lovely Earl of Beaucatchet! And you want to do likewise!"

"You want that Willie boy who's been hanging around you to clap his hand to his brow every time you start down the stairway and murmur 'Ye gods! How beautiful she is!' What a lovely dream! Don't do it! Little he stops to reck how much your father is set back to pay the bill! He doesn't even notice what you have on, child!"

"Why, when I went to see your mother I was so interested in the way her hair grew in little curls on the nape of her neck and the manner in which the blue of her eye darkened at times that she could have worn a potato sack, and I wouldn't have been any wiser! I'll bet right now that if he were asked to describe the dress of your mother he'd shot the next minute the price of lead would go up! At the most he would be able to say that it was a dress that was cut on the bias and that you resembled in June rose!

"Why don't you buy cheesecloth and sew it up yourself instead of letting that madame woman sell you something she's cobbled up in her back parlor? When your mother——"

"But girls didn't go to as many things in those days!" protested his daughter. "They didn't need more than one dress!"

"Huh!" said Popslinger indignantly. "Don't you fool yourself! There were weekly parties at which they shucked corn huskings and apple dryings and many other social diversions at which a young lady wanted to look best! It simply didn't occur to her that more than one dress was a possibility! She'd just as soon have expected a diamond tiara at her place every Sunday morning!"

"I suppose, if you got it into your head that you'd be dragged up your set unless you had a complete chance of jewelry each week, that I might just as well get rid of that bank book and have the insurance money to spend upon your frivolities! What have you got to have a new dress for this time?"

"There's a dance at the club," said his daughter. "And I'm going with Mr. Biggins!"

"Mr. Biggins!" exploded Popslinger. "When you have the whole world to pick from please tell me why you, a young woman at a tremendous education which has cost me much gold and many gray hairs, should select Willie Biggins! If he had planned from the day of your birth to fail in love with the silliest, most egotistic, flat-headed, no-account boob he could find, you could find, you couldn't have hit it off better than with Willie Biggins! He——"

"I'm not in love with him!" protested his daughter.

"Then if you aren't it's all the worse for you to be going with him! No last penny just to dazzle his eyes with a new dress! You haven't even the excuse of his being rich! Why, you don't care about Biggins, why don't you wear a year before last's dress and be just as happy? Don't you think I have intelligence enough to recognize it?"

"But there will be plenty of people there besides him!"

"Aha!" cried Popslinger. "You're in love, with somebody else, somebody who scorns Biggins! You are going with Biggins just to make him jealous! I refuse to allow you to work me for my hard-reach chasing after and buying a double game like that! If he won't care about you in an old dress he won't give a hoot for a new one! Who is he, anyway?"

"He isn't any one!" cried his daughter impatiently. "Honest, dad, I really can't have a new dress I'll have to stay home! I've nothing but a taffeta dancing frock that's in perfect ribbons!"

Can't you put some chiffon stuff over it?" demanded her father. "When I was a young man I went crazy over a girl who was economical! Just tell your Willie boy how you saved me money and——"

"Do I get that dress?" insisted his daughter, doggedly.

"Oh, heavens, yes, I suppose so!" said Popslinger, reaching for his checkbook. "And get it of cast iron or something durable!"

* * *

His Money.

"You never did tell me how you happened to meet him," said the fluffy girl, settling herself on the porch swing.

"I never did meet him," said the girl with the new solitaire. "I thought I told you——"

"You never met him? I hope you did not strike up an acquaintance with him without being introduced."

"I suppose it was something like that, though I did not mean just that when I said I never met him. What I meant was that I ran him down in my car."

"Oh! Do you suppose he ran just as fast as ever he could?"

"I think he did. At least, he was gasping when I landed him."

"Ah! The way we are progressing, I expect you will have told me all about it in the course of a week or so."

"It is all your own fault; if you did no interrupt so often we might get somewhere."

"All right. Go on and tell me."

"It was at the theater. The young man I was with, whose name is none of your business, sat on my left, and beyond him sat a young lady with redkinses. On my right sat the very attractive young man, who was a total stranger. Before the performance I could look him over very nicely through the gauzy side of my hat, and after the curtain rose and the lights went out I could look me over very nicely while I looked at the stage."

"A case of mutual attraction. Isn't that romantic! I suppose he——"

"He did nothing of the kind. It was an unconscionably long performance, and when I happened to look at my watch I saw that we should have to hurry like a house afire to catch the last train. So I sprang to my feet and dragged the young man by the hand of your business toward the aisle. He nearly finished scrambling over the young man on my right he succeeded in struggling to his feet. Just at that moment I heard a shower of coins falling about me on the floor. Looking down, I saw that my purse was gaping open. I stooped and gathered a few coins, and then I called to the Perkinses to gather the rest and save them for me. Then I hurried away with the young man who is none of your business."

"Did the Perkinses get the rest of the money?"

"They started to do so, but when they had picked up one or two coins the young man on the right of the place I had vacated said in an embarrassed tone: "I—I beg your pardon, but—but that is my money."

"The idea!"

"That's exactly what Mr. Perkins then said," said Tom Yellow. "I've seen whole families like you, and put the money into his pocket.

"The next morning, I found a $20 goldpiece in my purse. It had been so long since I had seen a $20 gold-piece that I didn't recognize it, and couldn't imagine where I got it. Then Mrs. Perkins came over and brought me a handful of small change and an odd pocket piece, and told me about the young man who had claimed the money. He said he had had his hand in his pocket when I started so suddenly to climb over him, and in rising he had withdrawn his hand and scattered his change all over the floor."

"Did you suppose he would?"

"I knew it! I felt like a robber! I looked high and low everywhere for him, and I had Mr. Perkins look for him, in fact, I dragged the city for that young man. Then, one Sunday, I sat next to him in church, and he looked over and over his glasses at me for whispering.

"And then what did you do?"

"He called me out and might make restitution. Now I have stopped chasing him and am permitting him to chase me for a change."

"Well, I see he has managed to hold you still long enough to put a diamond ring on you."

"Yes; I thought we ought to fix it so that minister will get a marriage fee to console him in some way we disturbed services that Sunday."

"Then, instead of getting some of his money back you let it go at that?"

"Why, you jealous thing!"

* * *

Rude Awakening.

As usual, the road was "up," and so was part of the street, for that matter. But it mattered little to the sleep Mrs. Bargainhunter at home. Her two children comfortably ensconced in the perambulator, she sailed down the yawning street.

Oh, what a darling of a duck of a sweet little mummy-baby! And, leaving the perambulator, she walked to the shop window for a closer look. Absorbed in the contemplation of a hat, she gazed at it all unconscious of the fact that the perambulator had rolled away into the trench, until at last she was awakened from her blissful dream by the gruff voice of a workman.

"Say, missus," he said, "d'yer want these kiddies any more? 'Cos we're just going to fill the hole up!"

* * *

The females of the species are wearing smaller hats this season, but the bills are just as large.

For Scotland's Queen

Or, Hearts and Swords

By T. C. Harbaugh

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CHAPTER IX.

I RECKON WITH QUASIMONDO.

NOTHING but the cool audacity of Bess Butterfly had saved me from untoward consequences, and, therefore, I had a warm spot in my heart for the heroic girl.

Now occurred two startling events that seemed almost to sever the slender thread of the sword of Damocles which hung over our heads. One morning Lancaster was found in his house stabbed to death, and the following night young Montjoy met the same fate. These terrible catastrophes left but Sussex, Sir Cecil, Putney and myself as members of the council, not to mention Lady Elenora, who was with us heart and soul.

Overwhelmed by the cruelty of fate, we met in Surrey House to plan our next move. Sir Cecil and the others wondered why Captain Young had not left us, and Lady Elenora and I did not disclose the secret of his absence. Of course, the Captain had not attended the last meeting that had lessened our numbers, and we were at sea as to the real assassin. In the midst of our deliberations the door opened and Lady Elenora came forward. Never before had I seen her look so beautiful. It seemed that a new Boadicea had come upon the stage. Richly clad and regal in her beauty, she confronted her bosom friends, having no excitement and her dark eyes aflame. She halted at the table, upon which she laid the tips of her jeweled fingers, and for a moment looked us over in silence.

"The time for action has come!" said she, her words ringing through the room like trumpet calls. "Though the hand of the assassin has struck, there must be no faltering. It is the work of the Queen's braves. Such is the sympathy for Mary Stuart that the Tudor Honess dared not arrest Lancaster and Montjoy. If you are men you will go ahead in what you have sworn to do. I pledge you the heart and hand of Dames of Surrey to the holy cause. The Rose of Scotland must not perish on the block and thus stain the name of England. You, my brother, you, Sussex, you De la Tournay,"—and how lovingly she looked at me—"and you, young Putney, must devote your lives and your sacred honors to this enterprise."

She ceased and walked from our sight, and for some moments a dead silence fell on the apartment. We had resolved to go on. The death of Lancaster and Lancaster had not driven us from our purpose. In saving Mary Stuart we would be avenging them, and while we might never know who dealt the murderous blows, we would be victors in the fray.

Putney was coming on well at Pothering-hay. He had not been suspected. His pretended loyalty to Elizabeth had won him in the eyes of our enemies and he was on the eve of acquainting the captive with our designs.

There was now one other thing that filled my mind. I determined to discover who was the assassin, that I might the more insure our safety and enable us to work with more success. But how to go about this was the puzzle.

I resolved, and my resolution found favor in Lady Elenora's eyes, to venture forth in disguise, for in that garb I could not be penetrated by our adversaries. I therefore dyed my hair and, clad in new clothing, fitted with a sword which did not bear the crest of Tournay, I sallied forth on my doubtful mission.

At the time of which I write there was no other such place in walled London as Marylebone Gardens. The great playground was the haunt of all classes, but more especially of the nobility. One could hear all the prevailing gossip there. It was kept his eyes and ears open he would see and hear many things not to be gathered elsewhere. The park was well lighted at night, and birds of all feathers gathered in its vistas.

I entered Marylebone incognito. Frivolity was already at its height, and in many little tables beneath the trees well dressed lords and ladies were amusing themselves with cards.

Suddenly my gaze fell upon one of these little groups and I easily singled out Lady Somerset. An empty bench stood near the players, and I strolled thither and took a seat. I soon discovered that fortune was favoring my late acquaintance, and that one of the other ladies was a heavy loser. The mistress of Somerset House was in her element. She gossiped as she played.

"Those were two fine strokes," I heard her say. "A few more and we shall be clear of all Queen Bess' foes."

My heart beat fluttering at these words. I leaned a little closer and listened the more.

"I wish my fool had been one of them," she went on with a little laugh. "But first of all I'd like to make him drink the toast he refused."

This allusion to myself caused a start.

"Why did you not throw him into the hands of your servants?" queried a bedrouged duchess looking up from her "hand."

"Hess you, he was too swift for me," was the reply. "Why, he went down the staircase like a bolt. But wait. There are claws beneath the Somerset velvet."

I did not doubt this from what I had already seen, and so I listened on. As I had the whole night to myself I lingered on the bench, watching and listening, playing with the leaves with the point of my sword and treasuring up every word that fell upon my ears.

Presently some one approached and handed a note over Lady Somerset's shapely shoulders. She looked up and seized the folded paper. Leaning back in her chair she read it with eager eyes. All at once she left her place and walked to a spot not far away. There she met a figure that had been concealed by the drooping branches of a tree.

I followed her, but cautiously. What was my surprise when I saw her meet no less a person than Quasimondo, the dwarf. The little imp of darkness was holding converse with this great lady who, upon any other occasion, as I well knew, would have spurned him with her dainty foot. I was unable to catch the first word of their confab, but I saw Lady Somerset draw her purse and place a lot of coin in Quasimondo's hand. He seized upon it as if it were the elixir of life. She bent over him a moment and then lifted her finger tell-tale-like. Quasimondo nodded approval of her whispered words, and doffing his plumed hat, made a stately obeisance and loped away.

In another moment I was following the movements of this treacherous fox. He led me a long chase ere he stopped, but his twisting and turnings had not disheartened me. I wanted to see where Quasimondo nested since his dismissal from Surrey House, and I was at last rewarded by tracking him into Bullfinch alley which was not the best quarter of the city.

"So here is where you kennel, my fox," cried I, halting within a few yards of the house, and while I looked a taper flashed up in the lone window.

I now drew nearer the place and, screening myself by a bushy snake, looked through the window. Quasimondo had already seated himself at a small table upon which the taper burned, and had begun to count the money received from Lady Somerset. His inspection drew a triumphant leer from his animal-like face

to his doom; who had murdered her husband Darnley; who had conspired against Elisabeth—the wife of Bothwell, the "viper of Scotland," and the empress of unholy love!

She did not leave the window till some moments had passed. When she at last turned to me her face had assumed another expression. Her look was all eagerness now.

"I trust we shall succeed," she exclaimed, but not in resonant tones. "I do want to be free. I want to see Scotland again. I long to see the bonnie land of my birth, to regain my throne and then—" her eyes were flashing now—"and then I shall smile those who have smitten me!"

"It shall be thus!" cried I, drawn to enthusiasm by her words. "I pledge your majesty the sword of De la Tournay and the best blade in two kingdoms."

A hopeful smile wreathed her lips.

"Dear de not know you are here?" she suddenly asked.

"No one but the true one knows," I replied.

"I thank Heaven for a friend when the whole world seems dark. It is an English boast that I have no friends."

"And an English lie," I said.

It was then I came to the real import of my risky errand. In low tones I told Queen Mary of the state of affairs; how it had progressed, and finally how we hoped to snatch her from the clutches of Elisabeth.

She listened passively, but with interest. Her white face did not change. Her hands folded restfully, her manner was listless, and I tried to read in her deep eyes the success for which I prayed.

When at length the task was done, Mary Stuart held out her hands, and looking into my eyes gave me her blessing. Then she took off a ring—the only one ring from her finger and placed it in my hand.

"From Scotland's Queen for the lady of your heart," said she. "It is the ring I wore in France ere the gloomy years came. Place it on the finger of your future bride."

Methought I heard a deep sigh as the iron door shut me out from those of Scotland. At the end of the corridor the form of Putney came out of the gloom.

"She will carry out our wishes?" said he.

"There's no fear of unwillingness," I returned.

"And you are still for Mary Stuart?" asked the jailer coldly.

"She binds me closer to her every time we meet," said Putney. "I would die a thousand deaths to wrench her from the snares of the lioness of Tudor."

It was past midnight ere I found myself outside the walls of Fotheringay. I looked back at the oil pile and saw in one lofty window the glimmer of a taper. It was Queen Mary's window. She had not retired, and was probably thinking of the hope I had brought her. For some time I watched the little light and reluctantly turned away.

I longed to tell Lady Elenora of my adventure. I longed to tell her that Queen Mary's ring, which I hoped some day to place upon her fair finger when we had saved the unhappy Queen and blunted Queen Bess' ax.

Late as the hour was a light burned in Lady Elenora's room. I rapped on the head of the grand staircase to pass to my own apartment her door swung open and the light revealed her face.

"I have been waiting for you," said she and I went forward.

Her face was deadly white and I thought I saw in her eyes a gleam of fear.

"I am alone in the house," she went on as she closed the door behind me. "Sir Cecil has not returned, but his absence does not concern me much."

"What does, then?"

"The fear that our enforced guest has escaped."

"Captain Comas?"

"Yes, the man in the dungeon."

"Let us see if that fear holds him," cried I. "A look will tell all."

"But I fear to look," trembled Lady Elenora.

I caught up the light on the table and after taking my sword from my room, we proceeded in the direction of the brawler's prison. What if the fellow had escaped? What if he was free after our deal with him and while the knowledge he had of the plot? My own face grew white when I thought of it.

Lady Elenora was following me with shaking footsteps, as I could perceive.

At the end of the passage leading to the cells she handed me a key, and I inserted it into the lock.

"Be careful," she whispered at my ear.

While she stood I pushed the door open and with the other moved the light forward. In one corner of the dungeon I saw a human form stretched on a pallet and turned with a smile to Lady Elenora.

"He is still the bird in the cage," whispered I.

"Art sure?" she asked.

"Look for yourself."

She glided to my side and leaned over the gloomy threshold, her gaze flying to the same object I had seen.

"Come! I have seen enough," she cried, suddenly drawing back. "Let us go."

There was no speech between us till we had reached the upper floor.

"We were fortunate in not arousing the lion," said I.

"Indeed we were—if he whom we saw on the pallet be Captain Comas."

"Who else can it have been?" I exclaimed.

"Oh, Henri, I fear—I think—I dream ——" And she clasped her hands.

"Then let me prove all your fears false," I cried. "I will waken Captain Comas—"

"Not tonight," and her hand encircled my wrist. "Not tonight, I implore. Perchance everything is well." And I went away without telling her of my interview with Mary Stuart or showing her the poor Queen's ring.

CHAPTER XI.

A STARTLING DISCOVERY.

MASTER!"

Although the word was spoken in a whisper it went through me like a knife.

I was standing in the dark shadow of old St. Paul's, and before I turned I knew who had spoken. It was my man Jean.

He plucked my sleeve and drew me deeper into the shades.

"Did you not see him?" continued Jean. "The man in the cellar?"

"What!" cried I. "Captain Comas?"

My servant nodded.

"Are you sure, Jean?" I said.

There was certainty in his eyes, and for a moment I stood stunned. How did it were true? What if Captain Comas was again at large? I felt my blood run cold to my very toe-me. How did Captain Comas escape from the cellar?"

"Heaven knows," breathed I. "But a few hours ago I saw him on his pallet there."

"Perhaps it was not the Captain. It may have been a trick of Cardinal Henri."

I started. Why not? If I had investigated when Lady Elenora went to the dungeon I might have saved myself deception, if deception there was. Now, if this wretch was at liberty, farewell to our plot to rescue Mary Stuart.

For some moments after Jean's revellation I stood like one in the grip of a horrid dream. Then I spoke to Jean.

"Might we not find him at the Cardinal's Hat? Let us inspect that place."

"And there we encountered him."

"Oh, I've reckoned with that imp," I broke in. "There will be no funeral for him."

Jean's stare was a question, but I did not enlighten him.

We paced in the direction of the tavern and boldly entered. Such was my state of mind that, had I found Captain Comas there, I would have rushed him like an enraged lion and forever silenced his treacherous tongue. But he was not in sight.

"I must see for myself," said I. "I must look into the cellar," and with this thought echoing my brain I hastened to Surrey House.

With a waxen taper in my hand I descended the steps leading to the dungeon and threw its little light around. The same object Lady Elenora and I had seen on the pallet was still there. I approached it and held the light close to the straw. A well-arranged dummy lay there. It was made to look like a human. The last food which the servant had brought Captain Comas had not been touched.

By some devilment he had escaped. Was there treachery among the servants of Surrey House? Whether or not he procured this demon that he might bring all our plans to naught? There was now but one thing to do. I must find and rescue the liberated wolf.

But where should I look for him? Had he gone to his own wife's factory, or had he taken it direct to the throne?

The person who reads this long after the Tournay affair will be thrilled by the terrible situation that confronted me. I was myself no longer. The danger that I thought myself in was not as great as that which threatened the beautiful Lady Elenora. I feared only for her, forgetting myself in the agony of the moment. I avoided her in my hasty return to Surrey House. I would keep for the present the knowledge of Captain Comas' escape. Heaven help me to run him down before he had destroyed us all.

I went back into the pulsing heart of London.

I had told Jean to wait for me at a certain place and there I found the faithful fellow. It would be like scouring a haystack for the man I wanted. He had his horse with him and had provided himself from them in order to avoid my blade?

As I turned into Blackfriars street I heard a number of salvos from a cannon on the walls of the Tower, and looking down the thoroughfare I perceived Queen Bess in her sedan chair approaching me. She was surrounded by her armed guard, all of whom carried halberds and held their heads high, as if they supported the most merciful sovereign in all the world.

I paused to look at her. The Queen now had passed the youthful years of her life and her aging had not improved her looks. There was a scowl on her bedecked face which showed me how eager a woman is to conceal her looks, but at the same time there was about her a regality which was in keeping with the lofty state she bore. This time I was not to be besieged by the rabble as on the occasion when I saw her last, for her coming into Blackfriars was unexpected.

The guards formed a ring of metal about her, and sitting upright in her chair the queen appeared to be busy with her prayer-book.

As she came opposite me she raised her eyes and her face fell for an instant upon my face. It was but a sweeping glance, but I was in her line of vision and detected a look of terror. I trembled.

"The serpent!" I heard a voice hiss beside me.

I looked down and saw a woman at my side.

"Be still," said I in warning tones. "Walls have ears, woman."

Our gaze met as the words fell from my lips.

"Oh, is it you?" smiled the creature. "I've fixed my window." And then I knew that the speaker was Moll White.

"The wound in your head has not come back," she went on. "It was the bird in the nest in the old alley. Now he dresses in velvet and doublet wears a sword—as it suits him."

"And pray what is the robber's name?"

"He has no name," smiled Moll. "When he hobnobs with the young nobles he is Captain Comas, and when he does poorer pluming he is Dumpe."

"Oho!" laughed I. "Think you, Moll, I would find this fellow in the alley now?"

"I've not seen him lately," she replied. "Perchance he is dead. Or I caught sight of him."

By this time Queen Bess had passed on, going not through the palace, but in direction of my Lord Essex's house.

"Show me where Natty Bumps nests," I commanded, and Moll darted off.

"He is a night-bird," she said while we hurried on. "Owllike, he sleeps in the daytime."

"Then for the owl!" I hissed.

It was not a long journey to Paradise alley and Moll then paused. It.

"The fourth house from mine," she said, halting at her own domicile. "Heaven grant that you find the nasty bird at home."

With the woman out of my sight I ran between two houses, pulled up by a garden in the rear of the place I sought. I was confident that so far I had not been observed. All the interior of the house was to task, for the rear door was not fastened, and in a few moments I was inside. A low-celled room received me. I pushed across it with my sword in my hand and found another door closed.

The apartment beyond was quite dark. If there were curtains to the windows they were drawn, and the stillness of death filled the place. I stood in the darkness with every faculty on the alert. Comas there, or was he not? At last I once I heard low groans in one corner. It went to my heart like an arrow. I knew Captain Comas! I had really found my prey. If I had but the faintest light to aid me——

The words were repeated. I tiptoed across the floor and halted where I thought the corner was. My heart was now wonderfully calm. Another second I swung into the lap of time and then a voice said:

"Why does he not come to Quasimodo?"

I almost started from my feet. Instead of finding Captain Comas I had found the dwarft whom I had flung into the Thames!

CHAPTER XII.

QUASIMONDO ONCE MORE.

THE thrill of that pleading voice and the thought that the waters of the Thames had spared the despicable wretch who lay at my mercy seemed for a moment to still the beating of my heart. As yet Quasimondo had not suspected my nearness, for the groans had ceased, but yet I feared that subtle intuition might tell him that he was not alone.

What fate had preserved him from the rushing tide which held so many dark secrets which would never be exposed till the whole world stood at the Judgment Bar of God? Why had this suspected assassin of Montjoy and Lancaster been flung back upon the shore to carry on some more of his devilry?

The hand that gripped my blade slid from the hilt and I reached for it.

"He said he would come soon," wailed Quasimondo once more. "Has he deserted me? I feel the chill of death against me. I feel the chill of the cold water. Who flung me into them? Who caught me in the garden of Sussex House? Ah, if I but knew——

A flow of coughing broke up his sentences and I heard him fall back on his pallet.

So he was waiting for some one, and I doubted not that person was Captain Comas. Therefore, eager to meet this wolf, I drew off and waited in the darkness. He would come ere long. I thought he would enter the trap I had set for him and then——

I began to wonder if Quasimondo was the sole occupant of the den.

It was likely that Captain Comas, as Natty Bumps, did not live alone in that house. There must be, a woman there.

Yet, if there was, why had she not come to Quasimondo's assistance?

Presently the dwarf arose out in his pain and I heard the patter of feet on a stair. This again sent my hand to my sword, and I stared in the direction from which the sounds had come. A door squeaked as it opened. Next there was a streak of light, and I saw on the steps the outline of a woman's head and the face of Medusa. All she lacked was the serpents in her hair.

It was a thin face in which set a pair of hungry eyes, a long figure and a receding forehead. He age was a mystery, but she looked like one who had inhabited the earth since the days of the Witch of Endor. She did not see me as she crossed the room, and when she held her light above Quasimondo I was in the shadow of her body.

"You'd keep me awake all night with your ravings!" she cried. "Why don't you die at once?"

"Die!" echoed the dwarf. "Who cares to die before his time? When the Captain comes——

"He may never come," was the interruption. "Mr. Captain may remain away till doomsday."

"But he would not be gone long, he said," the dwarf went on. "I am in great pain, for was I not strangled before I was flung into the Thames, and didn't I strike a barge beholden?"

"What care I what happened to you?" was the merciless rejoinder. "I didn't want you to die my self."

"Nor I wouldn't have come here if I had had my way."

There was reply.

"Set the light on the table that I may not be alone in the dark," resumed Quasimondo.

This was just what I didn't want the woman to do.

"I'll have you that far," I heard her say. "You must have an evil conscience that pricks you if you dare not lie in the dark."

"Never mind my conscience. Mayhap it is as clean as yours."

The woman moved toward the table and placed the light thereon. I watched her every movement. For a few moments she busied herself in the room and then stole away, but with an injunction to the dwarf to keep a still tongue in his head.

Now that I was left alone with Quasimondo I wondered how soon I would be discovered. The candles and lamps around the place, were pretty sure to unmask me, and I hugged the wall, scarcely breathing, for fear my presence was unfound. The waxen taper was slow to reach its socket. I never saw a spark so tantalizing. At last it came that Quasimondo was leaving his pallet. He got up slowly and crawled to the table. A chair was there and on it he seated himself. Fortunately his forbidding face was partly turned from me.

He drew from his dirty surtout a dagger, the keenness of which he tested with his fingers. My rage beat like a drum. It was the same blade which had finished Montjoy and Lancaster! And, if I had not interfered, Sussex would have felt its point.

"The other one would have followed his friends," chuckled Quasimondo, as my gorge rose higher. "I was almost on my prey. I wonder what sort of a corpse he would make, anyhow?"

Back and forth ran his dark fingers along the dagger's steel. I thought I could hear them glide over the shining surface. Such was the terrible tension that I could stand it no longer. Keeping my eyes upon Quasimondo I slipped forward and halted at the opposite side of the table. He did not see me for a minute, but when his deep-set eyes discerned me he fell back with a gasp.

"Don't stir!" said I, bending over him. "Don't raise an alarm."

He spoke none.

"So 'twas you who let out the blood of Lancaster and Montjoy!" I went on. "So it was you who was the very one you hold in your hand—that would have added Sussex to the list if the Thames had not claimed him."

"Who are you? Ah, I see!" and he would have sprung to his feet if my hand had not reached over the table and clutched his shoulder.

"You know me?"

"You are Montjoy!"

"Henri, Sieur de la Tournay!" I shot into his quivering face. "And you are Quasimondo, servant, informer and murderer!"

"When did you come?" he trembled.

"No matter when. Did you think that, though the waters gave you up, I would never know it?"

"They had no use for Quasimondo," he grinned.

"I don't blame the river for casting out such offal. You would do it time have betrayed your late mistress, Lady Elenora."

"What, betray the lady of my love?"

"Hush, devil!" I flashed. "The very thought of Lady Elenora being loved by such a deformity as you sets my blood at the boiling point. My sword itches to wash out the insult in your blood."

"But it will not, Sieur de la Tournay."

"Don't tempt it too far."

Instantly I shook the dagger from his hand and it rattled to the sanded floor.

"How far have you carried your vil-

(Continued on page twenty-three.)

Gold and the Girl
Or, A Cattle Man's Grit
By Wilder Anthony

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CHAPTER VIII.

THE BATTLE.

WHEN Wade and his foreman approached the big pine, the waiting men debouched from its shadow and rode forward, with the borrowed rifles across the saddle horns.

"All right, boys?" the rancher asked, taking the Winchester automatic, a beautiful gun, which Lawson extended to him.

"All right, sir," called Tim Sullivan, adding the "sir" by way of extenuation of his befuddled condition the night before, while each man gave Santry a silent handshake to welcome him back.

Grimly, silently, then, save for the splashing of their horses' hoofs against the loose stones, and an occasional muttered imprecation as a rider lurched in his saddle, the seven men rode rapidly toward the mountains. In numbers their party was about evenly matched with the enemy, and Wade meant that the advantage of surprise, if possible, should rest with him. But however that might be, each man knew that the die had been cast and understood the importance of the move they had undertaken.

"I only wish," grumbled Santry, as a steep gradient forced them to lessen their speed, "that I can get my two hands on that cussed tinhorn of a Moran. Indeed me has a misunderstandin' to settle, for sure."

"You leave that to me," Wade spoke vindictively. "We're only meat."

"Well, since you ask it, I'll try, boy. But there's going to be some fightin' sure as tazes, and when I get to fightin' I'm likely to go plumb locoed. Say, I hope you don't get into no trouble about this here jail business. That 'ud make me feel bad, Gordon."

"We'll not worry about that now."

"That's right. Don't worry until the time comes, and then shoot, instead. That's been my motto all my born days, and it ain't such a dum bad philosophy, I wonder"—the old man chuckled—"I wonder if the sheriff et up most of that there sheet before Bat let him loose?"

Wade laughed out loud, and as though in response an owl hooted on the mountain side.

"That's a durned old hoot owl," growled Santry. "I never likes to hear them things."

He rode to the head of the column of men, and the rest of the way to the ranch was passed in ominous silence amongst the party. When they arrived there and cautiously dismounted, everything was as from the night before, as it should be. The hour being late, the lights were out, and there was no sign of life about the place. Wade wondered if the posse had gone.

"There ain't no use speculatin'," Santry said, "you'll be asleep and they may not. This'll take a rise out of 'em, anyhow."

At sight of the old fellow, pistol in hand, Wade called to him to wait, but as he spoke Santry discharged the weapon twice, rapidly, in the air.

There was an immediate commotion in the ranch-house. A man inside was heard to curse loudly, while another showed his face for an instant where the moonlight fell across the window. He hastily withdrew it, pulled from the rifle of one of the cowmen smashed the glass in the window-pane to smithereens. Presently a gun cracked inside the house and a splash on a rock behind the besiegers told them where the shot had struck.

"Whoop-e-e-e-e!" Santry yelled, and added: "We've got 'em guessin'. They don't know how many we are."

"They were asleep," Wade said sharply. "We could have sneaked in and captured the outfit. That's what I meant to do, when you let loose."

Santry was chagrined, but attempted to hide it.

"Well, now, that would have been a mite risky, boy. As things stand, we've got all the advantage, here in the dark. We'll get"—— He broke off to fire at a man who showed himself at the same window, in an effort to get sight of the assaulting party.

Wade had thrown himself behind a bowlder, to Santry's right, and was shooting methodically at the door of the house, directly in front of him. The action of the new rifle surprised and delighted him; he had only to pull the trigger, and leave everything else, save the sighting, to the mechanism of the wonderful gun. He knew the door at which he aimed. It was built of inch boards and was so located that a bullet, after passing through, would rake the interior of the cabin from end to end. The only way that the inmates could keep out of the line of his fire was by hugging the walls on either side, where they would be exposed through the windows to the leaden hail which Santry and the punchers were pouring in.

There was a grim, baleful look on the young man's usually pleasant face, and his eyes held a pitiless gleam. He was shooting straight, knowing that, very fiercely joying in the act. The blood lust was upon him, that primal, instinctive desire for combat in a righteous cause that lies deeply hidden at the bottom of every strong man's nature. His enemies had crowded him to the wall, and now they must pay the penalty. Wade fingered the trigger of the automatic as though he were at other business in life. A streak of yellow mud, mingled with a bloody trickle from a bullet scratch on his cheek, lent to set features a demoniac ferocity of expression.

Santry, glancing toward him, chuckled again. "The boy's woke up at last," he muttered to Lawson, who was working the lever of his rifle with great speed. "They drove him to it, durn 'em. I knew almighty well that this law and order stunt couldn't be worked on him."

The exclamation was caused by a bullet, which ricochted from a rock close to Santry's head, showering a quantity of fine particles into his face.

"Whoop-e-e-e-e! We got 'em goin'. It's a cinch they can't stand this pace for more'n a week."

Indeed, it was a marvel that the defenders kept their cover as long as they did. Already the door, beneath Wade's machinelike precision with the automatic, had been completely shot away, windows were bare of glass and great splinters of wood had been torn from the exterior of the logs by the impact of the balls, as they tore through, bearing death and destruction within. Soon the door crashed in, leaving a large gaping hole Wade continued to drive a hail of bullets.

At last the fire of those within slackened and temporarily ceased. Did it mean surrender, Wade asked himself, and paused to consider, but, even as he stop shooting and await developments. For some moments all was still, and the advisability of a rush to the house itself was being discussed amongst the cattle men. Could it be that the defenders were all killed, or wounded, and, for in that event, their fire would have gradually slackened, instead of ceasing suddenly.

The besiegers did not know what to make of it, when, all at once, the fire of the defenders burst forth in volleys. But what were they firing at? There was an awful crackling of exploding shells, but with the exception of lead, to be aimed at Wade and his men. The word was given to resume shooting and the din of the battle was renewed, while in the uproar, until the sound was like the exploding of a thousand firecrackers.

"What in — — — is the matter?" peevishly demanded Santry. "What they got in there, a Maxim gun?"

"I don't know," Wade answered, charging the magazine of his Winchester for another deadly hail into the open doorway of the house.

Then, sporadically but none the less certainly, the fire from within began to slacken, until, except for an occasional exploding shell, everything within the house was quiet once more. This was more like a condition of death, and again Wade ordered the men to cease shooting. They complied, and grim silence followed.

"Do you surrender?" Wade called out loudly, but there was no response.

He and Santry exchanged glances.

"By the great horned toad," parted the old fellow, "I'm a-going up there. Anybody that wants a fellow, can."

Not a man in the party could be dared in that way, and taking advantage of such cover as offered they advanced upon the cabin cautiously at first and then rapidly, as they met with no resistance; no sign whatever of life. A final rush, that required courage, carried them within the ranch-house, where they expected to find a shambles.

Wade struck a light, and, moved with the agility of a cougar at a low groan from a corner of the room. The groan came from Eddie Nelson, one of the three men belonging to the Double Arrow, who were still trussed up and now were gagged. With his knife, Wade was freeing them, and looking about him in wonderment for the wounded defenders he had expected to find, when Santry set up a shout from the kitchen.

"What in the name of — — — — — —"

"That firin' we heard wasn't shootin'," lugubriously said Lawson, coming back into the room. "There ain't nobody here. They're all gone."

Wade was staring at him in amazement, when Santry stumbled into the room, choking with laughter.

"They done us, Gordon. They chucked a mess of cartridges into the old cook stove, and sneaked out the back, while we was wonderin' if they was dead. By cracky, that beats all!"

"That's what they did," spoke up the man that Wade had freed of the gag. "They cloned us, that's what, so we couldn't sing out. They was all for shootin' us, but they give that idea up."

A shout of laughter burst from the rest of the party, in which Wade had to join.

"Well, we took the ranch, anyhow," he declared. "How're you feeling, Eddie, pretty stiff?"

"My head's — awful!"

"Me, too," said Tom Parrish, the second of the victims, while the third man of the three that Wade's have the use of his legs again before Christmas.

"Yes, we took the ranch," said Santry, glancing about the littered and blood-bespattered room. "And from the looks of this here hog killin', we stung 'em up pretty bad, I reckon. But that durn tinhorn, Moran——"

"He'll keep," Wade said grimly. "We've not done with him yet, Santry. We've just begun."

CHAPTER IX.

THE CAT OUT OF THE BAG.

IT WAS toward morning when the routed posse, with Moran in the lead, his wrist bandaged with a blood-stained handkerchief, rode into Moondance. A bullet had pierced the fleshy part of his wrist, a trifling wound, but one which gave him more pain than he might have experienced from a more serious injury. None of the members of the posse had been grievously hurt, indeed, they had suffered more in the spirit than in the flesh; but there had been a number of minor accidents to some of the men, which made a sufficiently bloody display to arouse the little town to palpitant interest.

Acting under instructions from their leader, however, they kept grouchily silent, so that no curiosity was able to feed only upon what was known of Wade's temper and the fact that he had brought the deputy's release from confinement. The story of that achievement had been bruited about Moondance throughout the night, together with the probability that the law would be invoked to punish the rancher for his defiance of it. Popular sentiment was running high over the likelihood of such a step being taken, and the members of the posse were the target of hostile glances from the townspeople.

The inhabitants of Moondance were with Wade to a man, before they took active means in his behalf they waited upon the return of a rider who had set out in haste for the ranch to learn at first hand just what had happened there.

Meanwhile, Moran, morose and revengeful, had awakened the Senator from the trance into which he had come to him after much wakeful tossing. Rexhill, with tousled hair, half enveloped in his bathrobe, footed it, one of which his bare feet protruded, sat on the edge of the bed in his sleeping-room, impatiently listening to Moran's account of his defeat.

"You went too far—you went too far," he said angrily as the moonlight-lighted cigar between his lips. "You had no orders from me to jump the man's ranch. What——"

"We've been fooling around here long enough, Senator," Moran spoke sullenly as he nursed his injured wrist. "It was time somebody started something. You seem to think"—his voice trailed into scorn—"you seem to think that we were taking pap from a baby, but it's men we're up against. It's the first blow that counts. You'll find that we——"

"Well, we got in the hardest lick, eh!" Rexhill snorted. "The first blow's all right, provided the enemy don't a knock-out from the other side. Why, confound it, man, here we had Wade at our mercy. He'd broken the law, and set, free, an arrested suspect—a clear case of criminality."

Moran smothered an imprecation.

"You seem to forget, Senator, that we had him at our mercy before, and you wouldn't hear of taking advantage of it. If you'd taken my advice then, we'd have had Wade in jail instead of Santry."

"Your advice wasn't worth taking, and that's why I didn't take it." Rexhill deliberately paused and lit his cigar, from which he took a few puffs to draw him-

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self together. To have been aroused from sleep with such news had naturally taken him by surprise and flustered him; but he had never in his life known anything worth while to come out of heated discussion, and he sought now to calm himself. Finally, he spoke heavily. "What you proposed to me then was a plant, and all plants are dangerous, particularly when they haven't much substance behind them. For that reason, I declined your offer. But now this release of Santry from jail is—or was—an entirely different matter, an overt criminal act, with Sheriff Thomas as an unimpeachable witness."

Moran was smarting too keenly under his wound and his self-suffering spirit to be altogether reasonable. His manner lacked the respect which he had previously shown toward his employer. It was heated and contemptuous.

"You didn't base it on logic. It was sentiment, if I remember right. Wade had broken bread with you, and all that. I don't see but what that applies just as well now as it did then."

"It doesn't," said the Senator smugly, still rankling under the rancher's arraignment of him. "Hospitality has its limits of obligation. So long as I felt Wade to be an innocent man, I didn't see how I could initiate him in that way. But I don't admit any sentiment of hospitality which compels me to aid a criminal from the hand of justice. Sheriff Thomas has been to see me and I agreed with him that Wade should be brought to account for his defiance of the law. When the sheriff and I parted, the two was all on one side, and I didn't felt sorry for Wade and apprehensive of the consequences that most likely would develop from his act."

"Well, by God, if there's any sympathy for him floating about this room, it all belongs to you," Moran tenderly fingered his aching wrist. "I've got a few scores to settle with him, you can bet."

"But now where are we?" Rexhill ignored the interruption. "We are no better off than he was. I'll hide Santry out of jail, and we attempted to steal his ranch. The only difference is that so far he seems to have been successful, while we have failed."

Moran's head drooped before the force of the accusation, although he was impressed chiefly by the fact that they had failed. His failures had been few, because fortune had smiled upon him in the past; and although he had failed now he was the less able to meet failure philosophically. His plans at the ranch-house had done more than fail. They had to meet Wade in the daytime, in the open, and to provoke him, before witnesses, to some contemptible act which would justify battle. The surprise attack had left the agent without this excuse for the hostilities which had followed.

Rexhill walked up and down the room in thought, his bare feet patting the floor, with now and then a glimpse of his fat legs, uncovered by the flowing skirt of his bathrobe. A chew of tobacco smoke from his cigar trailed him as he walked, and from the way he chewed upon it Moran saw that his confrere in the Senate could have told that he was verging on one of his terrible pronouncements. Presently he stopped, and twisting the cigar between his lips so that the fumes would be out of his eyes, looked shrewdly at Moran.

"There's but one way out of this mess, Race. Now, heed what I say. I'm going to make my decision for the time of a telegram to the Interior Department that will bring a troop of cavalry down here from Fort Hadley. You don't want to go wrong on it yourself."

The agent sat up alertly as Rexhill, waging his peculiar forefinger, proceeded.

"You were not on the range for the purpose of jumping it, at all. Mind that now? You and I stand for the majesty of the law in this lawless community."

Moran's eyes twinkled, but he did not interrupt his employer. "When you and Thomas went out to the ranch, you carried two warrants with you, one for Santry, as the accessory, and one for Wade, as the principal, in the Jensen murder. Yes, yes, I know what you're about to say. But I must save my own bacon now. Since Wade has proved himself a lawbreaker, I'm not called upon to protect him."

"Now, you're talking," declared Moran, exultant at the prospect of such revenge upon the ranchman.

"I'll have the matter of the warrant fixed up with Thomas. Now, follow me. Thomas arrested Santry at the ranch, and then left you, as a deputy, to serve the other warrant upon Wade, when he should arrive at the ranch. It was because of the fact that Wade, after getting Santry out of jail, attacked you and your men, and it was in defense of the law that you returned the fire." Moran looked at his employer with admiration and the tension of the Senator's facial muscles relaxed. "Then I'll say," he smiled, "I will work out very well, I think." Rexhill concluded, "and any further hostilities from Wade will assume the same guise."

"Senator," said the agent, as Rexhill took up his fountain pen and began to write on a telegraph form. "You never should have come out of Denver. If you'd been in Cheyenne, or Omaha, or little old New York, you'd be in the White House now."

"You take this over and put it on the wire. It's to the Secretary of the Interior." Rexhill handed over the telegraph form, and Moran read it aloud.

"But what about the State rights of the matter?" Moran asked, anxiously. "Will they let Government troops come in here?"

The Senator waved his hand in dismissal of the difficulty.

"I'll have Thomas wire the Governor that the situation's beyond control. This town is miles from the railroad, and there's no militia within reach. The State'll be glad enough to be saved the money, especially when I explain that I call his Fort Hadley. Besides, you know, although Wade's ranch-house is within the State, a mile over the Colorado line, the night occurred on Government land. Leave that to me."

The Senator dressed Moran from the room and sat down heavily on the bed. He was pulling at his cigar, when, happening to glance toward the dressing-table bureau, he was startled to see in the mirror the white, startled face of his daughter. She was standing in the doorway looking at him. Rexhill had never known that he had a spine, to be conscious of it in the form of spiritual contravery, for her expression told him that she had heard the most of his conversation with Moran. It was natural to be the Senator's back. The most precious thing to him in life was the respect of his child; more important to him than even the financial security for which he fought, and in her eyes he saw that he was face to face with a greater fight than any he had ever waged.

"Father!"

"What, are you awake?"

He tried to make his tone cheery and natural, as he arose, wrapping the bathrobe about him.

"I heard what you said to Mr. Moran."

She came into the room, with only a dressing-gown thrown about her nightdress, and dropped into a chair. She seemed to feel that her statement of the fact was sufficient, although in itself, and waited for him to answer.

"You shouldn't have listened, Helen. Moran and I were discussing private matters—"

Her lips, which usually framed a morning smile for him, curled, and he winced. She turned from the embankment of her gaze, which seemed now to estimate him, as though to penetrate his venality, as she before she had accepted him lovingly, on faith.

"Certainly, they were not matters that you would like to have me hear, but I'm glad I did listen, father. Glad"—her voice broke a little—"even though it can never again be as it has been."

He went to her and put his heavy hands on her shoulders, which shrank before his touch.

"Now, don't say things that you'll regret, Helen. You're the only girl I have, and I hope that you and father you'll have, so we ought to make the best of each other, oughtn't we, eh? You're proud, but you're sensitive. Don't let them run away with you—"

"Don't!" He made way for her as she got to her feet, and she tremblingly faced him, leaning for support upon the hideously ugly bureau. "I heard what you said to Mr. Moran. I don't want you to tell me we haven't been to each other. Don't I know that? Haven't I felt it?"

The Senator swallowed hard, touched to the quick at the sight of her suffering.

"You want me to explain it—more fully?"

"If you can? Can you?" Her mouth twitched spasmodically. "I want you to tell me something that will let me still believe that you are—that you are—oh, you know what I mean!" A deep purple suffused Rexhill's face, the blush of shame. "But what can you say, after what I heard?"

"You mean as regards young Wade? You know. I told you last night about his attack on the sheriff. You know, too"—the purple tide lifted as the Senator felt his blood stirred to action once more—"that I said I would crush him. You agreed with me that he should be crushed."

"You should fight fairly," said his daughter, with a quick breath of aggression. "Don't you believe that he killed Jensen? Do you? I know he didn't."

"Father!" Her scorn cut him like a whiplash. "Did he plan the warrants, too? Have you forgotten what I heard you, although you are going to declare that it was issued yesterday. Did he plan that?"

Once in his public career the Senator had faced an apparent impasse, and had wormed out of it through forced laughter. He had laughed so long and so genially that the very naturalness of his artifice had won the day for him. Men thought that if he had had a guilty conscience he could not have seemed so carefree. And the same dodge now with his daughter, in an effort to laugh away with easy good-nature her apprehensions of him as a frightful effort and he made bad work of it, increasingly so as he saw the ill success of the attempt upon her.

"Come, Helen, it is ridiculous that you should arraign me in this way. It is true that I issued the warrant yesterday for Wade, but it is also true that they intended to issue one, and it was only through luck that the two things were not done. Since then, Wade, besides attacking me, has proved himself a lawbreaker. I have nothing to do with the consequences of his acts, which rest with him. You have overheard something that you were not intended to hear, and, as is usually the case, have drawn wrong conclusions. The best thing for you to do is to forget what you have heard and leave the matter in my hands, where it belongs."

He laid his hands dominantly and expected her to yield to him. He was totally unprepared, well as he knew her spirit, for what followed.

She faced him with glowing eyes and her trembling lips straightened into a line full of determination. He was her father, and she loved him for what she had felt to be his worth; she had given him the change to explain, and he had not explained. Lately, as he knew, content to remain convicted in her eyes, or else he could not clear himself. Wade she loved tenderly, and he, at least, had done nothing, except to free a friend, who, like himself, was unjustly accused, from the clutches of the injustice of that, any more than she could ever forget her father's duplicity.

"I won't be left in the dark. If necessary, I will go to Gordon and tell him what you've done. I'll tell it to every one in Moonbeam. I'll force me to. I don't want to, because, think what that would mean to you! But you shan't sacrifice him. Yes, I will—I'll sacrifice you first!"

"Don't talk so loud," said the Senator anxiously, as she left him. "Don't be a fool, Helen. Why, it was only a few hours ago that you said Wade should be punished."

She laughed hysterically.

"That was only because I wanted to get him away from this awful place. I thought that if he were punished a little, he might be ashamed, and wouldn't want to stay."

Rexhill, who had been frightened at her hysterical threat of exposure, and assailed by his pride as well, felt his fear leaving him. Here was a development he thought rapidly and to some purpose. He had resolutely refused in the past to use his daughter for his ends, but the present occasion was an emergency, and major surgery is sometimes demanded by the nature of the case in hand. If she were willing to sacrifice him, it felt that he might properly enough make use of her moods to save himself and her as well. For if she were to shout abroad through Moonbeam the conversation she had just passed between him and Moran the likelihood of either of the two men getting out of the country would be more remote than she realized.

"So that was it, eh? And I complimented you upon your diplomacy!" His laugh was less of an effort than before. "Well, doesn't it hold good now as well as it did when I left, my dear, sit down and let's talk quietly."

She shook her head, but the woman in her responded to the note of confidence in his voice. She waited eagerly for what he might say, hopeful that he would be able to explain it away.

"You tell me I must fight fair. Well, I usually do fight that way. I'm doing it now. Why, only yesterday, after crushing Wade, I meant it, and I still mean it. But there are limits to what I can grant to any one, even to him; for one thing I don't want to see him hang for the Jensen murder, even if he's guilty."

"You know he is not!"

"I think he isn't." Her eyes lighted at the admission. "But he's going to be tried for the crime, beyond a doubt. The jury will decide, we can't. But even if he is convicted, I don't want to see him hanged. Why, we've been good friends, all of us. I—I like him, even though he did jump onto me yesterday. That was why"—he leaned forward, impelled to the falsehood that hung upon his tongue

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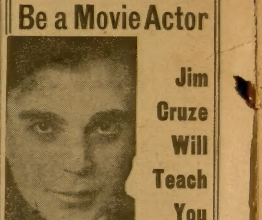

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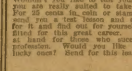

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Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.

by the desperate necessity of saving himself and his daughter's respect—"I arranged with Moran to have the boy arrested on such a warrant. He is bound to be arrested"—Rexhill struck the table with his fist—"and if he needs a basis for an appeal, after conviction, he could hardly have a better one than the evidence of conspiracy which a crooked warrant would afford. I wanted to give him that chance. I wanted to help him that much. If that time comes, I'll let the fact be known."

"Father!"

Helen dropped on her knees before him, her eyes moist with tears which clung to her lashes and her voice vibrant with happiness.

"Why didn't you tell me before, father? I knew that there must be some explanation. I felt that I hadn't loved you all these years for nothing. But do you think that any jury would say that Gordon——"

"I hope not."

Never had Rexhill felt himself more hopelessly a rascal than now, as he smoothed her hair from her forehead, but he told himself that the pain of this must be less than to be engulfed in ruin, or exposure, which must submerge them all. Moreover, he promised himself that if events bore too heavily upon Wade he should be saved at the eleventh hour. The thought of that made the Senator's position less hard.

"I hope not," he repeated. "Of course, the service of the warrant will further my own plans, but since a warrant would be served, anyway, I felt justified, after Gordon's conduct toward me, in availing myself of that advantage."

"Y-e-es," said Helen doubtfully. "Oh, it is too bad for him!"

"Well, maybe the grand jury will not indict him, feeling runs so strong here," her father continued, and she took fresh hope from this prospect. "But, anyway, he will feel the pressure of his conduct, and quite likely he'll be glad enough to say good-by to Moondance, when it's over. Then you and he can make for Paris, eh? All will be happiness, maybe, forever and aye."

"That's what I want to do, and that was all I meant when I said to—punish—him."

The Senator patted her cheek and drew a breath of relief, while she was buoyed up by the thought of getting Wade away eventually from the influence of Dorothy Purnell.

"By the way, father, I saw Miss Purnell on the street yesterday. You know, she was out when Gordon and I called to see her."

"Well, is she dangerous?"

Helen looked at him in amusement.

"Why, she does very well here," she said, with a little smile. "But in Washington or Paris, you'd never notice her."

This interesting story leads to very extraordinary situations and dramatic episodes. The reader will find it eminently worth reading to the end. Next week's Ledger will contain further chapters of it.

* * *

Her Methods.

Did Mr. Weaver want his wife to visit her mother, or did he not? Let students of human nature read this, and decide. Soon after breakfast Mrs. Weaver said:

"Henry, as you will have to stay in the house until your gouty toe is a little better, why can't I go up to New Rochelle and see mother?"

"You can," said Mr. Weaver, with charming amiability.

"And you will run the house?"

"Certainly."

"How nice," said Mrs. Weaver. "Now, I'll just tell you what to do each day that I am away."

"That is not necessary," said Mr. Weaver. "I have learned all your methods by heart. I can give you the schedule to a T."

"I don't believe you know the first thing to do in running this house," she protested.

"Yes, I do, and I'll prove it. I begin the day by beating the new vegetable man down several cents on potatoes, cabbages and turnips, the amount saved to be applied to the cost of future matinee tickets."

"Oh," said Mrs. Weaver.

"Next, I will manage to have a day's washing done in half a day. That will go to pleasure rides in the street cars."

"Oh, oh," from Mrs. Weaver.

"I will obtain all the neighborhood news by going across to the opposite flat to borrow a pattern from Mrs. Groves. The roast beef will turn black while I am away, but you always say that burned meat is wholesome, so that won't matter."

Mrs. Weaver emitted a series of "Oh's" that time.

"I shall then sell $10 worth of old clothes for $1.50," Mr. Weaver resumed, "and subscribe for the 'Perennial Encyclopedia,' to be delivered in installments at a dollar a volume, for forty years."

Mrs. Weaver took up her embroidery.

"Well," asked Mr. Weaver presently, "are you going to visit your mother?"

"No," said Mrs. Weaver. "I am not. Any man that's as mean as you are needs watching."

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The Biddlestone Mystery

Or, IN THE HOUSE OF FEAR.

By C. Mackie

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Begun in No. 19, May 8. Subscriptions can begin with that issue or back copies can be obtained from the news stands, our agents, or by mail from the office of publication.

CHAPTER VI.

HEZAR, THE MERCILESS.

A WOMAN'S voice whispered derisively in his ear.

"Only a few minutes and you will witness June Delmore's fate!"

Peter jerked about in the cramped space behind the idol and made out in the dimness that a woman's tall, slender form was pressed closely in the corner behind him. In the excitement following the entrance of the Hindus and his own hurried escape, Peter had not investigated his hiding-place.

Now he saw that he was not alone. He shared his quarters with a young and beautiful girl. She wore an evening gown of soft white chiffon, draggled and torn as if it had passed through many misadventures. With her masses of disordered black hair, her glowing, dark eyes, her creamy skin and colorless face, her rose-tinted lips, his fellow prisoner was rarely lovely.

"Not to be compared with June Delmore!" decided Peter while the vision of the girl flashed upon him.

He leaned toward her and spoke warningly:

"Are you the woman who escaped from the Hindus?"

She nodded. "It will be June Delmore's turn next!"

"Why are you glad of that?" he asked tensely.

Her glance darkened and her full lips pouted sullenly.

"Ah—I hate her!" she hissed.

"I am Peter Cable, Mr. Biddlestone's new secretary," said Peter. "Will you tell me your name?"

The girl eyed him curiously. "I am Blanca Weems: Mr. Biddlestone is my uncle."

"If you are Miss Weems, then you have known June Delmore only a few hours—am I right?"

"Yes—but that is enough!"

"Long enough to learn to hate her and wish her harm?"

"Yes," she gritted softly.

"Why?"

"Why?" she sobbed fiercely. "Why? From the instant she entered the room, Alfred—" Here she stopped and hid her face in her hands.

"Alfred Griswold admired her!" finished Peter.

"Alfred is engaged to marry me," she muttered.

Back From the Firing Line

First Aid to the Wounded.

PARIS, May 15.—At almost every station on the railroads you will see men shattered and wrecked for life, men who must face the future horribly mutilated, and yet they accept their fate without a murmur of complaint or bitterness. It is the same in England, in France and, I suppose, in Russia, that all soldiers are bearing their sufferings with the greatest of fortitude.

The best aid these men have is within themselves. The human body will best resist infection and disease when it is healthy, strong, active and with all of its functions fully alive and working. The best aid to this condition is a vegetable tonic and alterative that will first put the stomach and blood right, for these are dependent on one another. Good stomach means good blood, and likewise good blood means good stomach.

Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery helps the stomach to do its work naturally and properly, stimulates the liver. The system is freed from poisons. The blood is purified. Every organ is rejuvenated. This "Medical Discovery" of Dr. Pierce, is free from alcohol or narcotics. It is made from the roots and barks of American forest plants with triple refined glycerine as the best blood purifier, because it banishes from the blood all poison and impure matter. It dissolves impure deposits and carries them out, as it does all impurities through the bowels, kidneys and skin. If you have indigestion, sluggish liver, catarrh, unsteady nerves, or a pimply skin, get Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery today and start at once with the kind that puts energy and ambition into you and brings back youth and vigor.—Adv.

"June Delmore will never marry him!" declared Peter.

"Why?" she asked eagerly.

"Because she is going to marry me," was Peter's confident assertion. In his heart he knew that he had lived through this night of terror it would be his dearest ambition to woo and marry lovely June Delmore. In thus declaring his intention as an actual fact he was safeguarding the life of the girl whom he had learned to love all within a few hours. With Blanca Weems relieved of her jealousy, she would work no harm to June and might prove a valuable ally in case their safety depended upon some concerted action.

Peter was also relief in the girl's face and turned his attention to the peephole among the folds of drapery that fell about the image in the niche.

The tall Hindu was still standing there, but there was a change in his position. His head was bent in a listening attitude.

At first glance Peter feared that the man had heard the whispering behind the image; but just then the sound of approaching footsteps and the lighter tones of a woman silenced the protest came from beyond the temple door.

The door swung in and disclosed the two tall Hindus who had left the temple in disgrace a short time before. The first one carried in his arms the slight form of June Delmore.

The eyes of the leader glistened with pleasure.

"Good! So you have redeemed yourselves!" he laughed silkily. "You have brought the image in the niche—all!"

"Ah, but she is a tiger cat!" panted June's captor, still holding her tightly. "Atkar caught her claws in the face of the stranger—Atkar has eyes like an owl and can see in the dark; this woman all but scratched the eyes of our owl!"

The leader showed a row of white teeth beneath a line of black mustache.

"I like tiger cats," he said musingly; "I would tame this one!"

His eyes narrowed and a startled look bet ween them.

"She is promised to Da-Fou-Jan," said the first man menacingly.

"Da-Fou-Jan does not require a human sacrifice, Jehan," corrected the leader.

"It was promised us—to clear this place of all unclean things—and the treasure here is our own. Hezar, canst thou look upon the desecration of our temple in Ind—canst look upon the face of Da-Fou-Jan in the holy one, and refuse to avenge the wrongs visited upon us by these—"

Hezar put up a slender brown hand in protest.

"By the one whose name is not mentioned aloud here!" he finished. "I have not forgotten our wrongs, nor the vengeance required by Da-Fou-Jan! Not one shall be permitted two to escape—the first maiden and the big stranger—why not let the tiger kitten escape to my arms?" He smiled evilly.

"Hezar has the power!" conceded Jehan as he released June's trembling form. "The tiger kitten is his!"

Then the third man came forward. Nuri had a strong, handsome head that he wore fixed in dreamy transport upon the features of Da-Fou-Jan.

The priest of Ind looked a semicircle about June Delmore. Her white face was turned toward the idol's bronze countenance in fascination. Her red lips moved, and Peter, watching her with burning eyes, knew that she prayed for her liberty—or that she pleaded for her death rather than the arms of Hezar, the merciless one.

CHAPTER VII.

NURI'S PROPHECY.

NURI, the man with the dreamy, abstracted face, suddenly awoke to activity. He, too, had decided that the eager face of Hezar, whose covetous gaze was fixed on June's innocent loveliness, Jehan, who had yielded up the girl, and finally to June's pale, despairing countenance.

But it was not June's beauty which stirred Nuri to speak—it was not pity for her dreadful peril—nor a desire to save her life. It was not the world full of beautiful women?

His eyes turned toward the impassive face of Da-Fou-Jan, the god, and a fanatical fire burned luridly there.

It was then that Nuri uttered his dire prophecy:

"Hezar!" he chanted impressively. "If who am but a slave, chattel, a worm of the dust before Da-Fou-Jan, the most holy one, give warning that if you deny this sacrifice of the maiden's blood, the world thou lovest, the treasures thou covetest, will be snatched from thy eager lips—the oblivion of death will claim thee! Beware!"

Jehan turned an ashy face to the ground, but the proud features of Hezar showed no fear; they merely worked with a great fury that sent shudders through his strong body.

"Dog!" he burst forth. "Dost dare to warn a priest of Da-Fou-Jan?"

Nuri bowed his head humbly.

"Because I am that priest's slave," he murmured.

"Dost dare to threaten me—Hezar—priest of Da-Fou-Jan?" thundered the other.

Nuri lifted his eyes and again they blazoned with prophetic light.

"Touch thy hand to the maiden to claim her for thine own, Hezar, and the lightning of Da-Fou-Jan will strike thee dead!"

"And for thy presumption, slave, the lightning of Hezar, the merciless, will strike THEE dead!" shrilled Hezar, as he drove a glittering knife in Nuri's breast. June screamed and hid her face. As Nuri's body fell writhing to the floor finally to lie stark and cold between them, Jehan turned to the remaining servant, Jehan, with inflamed eyes.

"And hast thou a warning to utter?" he menaced.

But Jehan, the faint-hearted one, only salaamed before his master till Hezar, recovering, commanded him to take him rise.

"Thou, Jehan, will find another maiden, perhaps more fair, to escape from before. Then you can make offering to the holy one. As for me—come, flower of maiden, tiger kitten, thou art to be my own!"

Hezar reached out a long arm and caught June's shoulder in his supple hand; whirling her about to face his ardent gaze he compelled her unwilling eyes to meet her own.

Jehan stood back, his eyes fixed on the countenance of Da-Fou-Jan in fearful expectation of Nuri's prophecy being fulfilled.

He dared not interfere with Hezar, whose strength was ready to clear a path before him. Still, Jehan's superstitious soul quaked before the wrath of the god, Da-Fou-Jan.

"Come!" commanded Hezar gently, as he pulled June away from her place before the idol.

"Oh, Peter—Peter Cable!" moaned the girl. "Save me!"

The Hindu reached back and forth in the stone-walled chamber, penetrating that triangular space behind the broad form of Da-Fou-Jan.

"Call not upon your own gods," sneered Hezar, "for their ears are deaf!"

"Peter Cable is not a god—he is a man!" flashed the girl.

"No man can save you, pretty flower!" smiled Hezar confidently, but he endeavored to encircle her with his arms.

Then burst the wrath that had smoldered within him to equal bulk.

There came a sharp crack and a streak of flame from the idol. Hezar threw up his arms and instantly dropped like a dancing dervish, and then crumpled into a dead heap on the floor.

June Delmore freed from the Hindu's grasp, staggered away and fell upon a pile of mats, while Jehan, confident that Da-Fou-Jan had indeed come true and that Da-Fou-Jan had hurled his wrath upon Hezar, the merciless one, set up a fearful howl and cringed terrified from the place.

Then Peter Cable, forgetting that Blanca Weems was beside him there in the niche, saw only June, frightened and desolate in the temple where two dead lips now lay. He pushed the weapon he squeezed out through the narrow way and went to June.

She jumped to her feet at the first sound of his steps, but when she saw his anxious, good-looking face coming toward her she uttered a cry of delight and her sweet face was irradiated with a joy that found reflection in his own.

"I knew you would come!" she cried trustfully.

His hands grasped and held hers warmly, as he nodded toward Hezar's body. "It was the only way to save you," he explained ruefully. "I will get you away and then we will better be going —Heaven only knows how many more of these scoundrels are at large."

"Miss Weems! She is safe? Then, perhaps, she can tell me whether my mother escaped!" cried June.

But when Peter Cable had returned to the niche and conducted Blanca Weems into the space before the idol, that beautiful young woman only stared resentfully at June's eager face and turned away her head.

"My mother!" pleaded June. "Do you know whether my mother escaped from the thing that pursued us all?"

Blanca tilted back her head and laughed scornfully.

"Your mother!" she sneered. "I am quite sure that she has taken care that no one shall find her again!"

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"What do you mean?" gasped June, while Peter stared sternly at Bianca.

"I mean," said Bianca, slowly, "that the last any one saw of Mrs. Delmore was when she came out of Mr. Biddlestone's library with a blood-stained knife in her hands!"

CHAPTER VIII.

A RAY OF LIGHT.

JUNE DELMORE uttered a cry of despair and leaned against Peter Cable's supporting arm. Peter, glancing down at her colorless cheek, swept by long, curling lashes of golden brown, felt a great tenderness arise toward the girl who trusted him. Now he understood what June had meant when she said that she knew who had committed the murder in the library.

Bianca seems also to had been Mrs. Delmore, and June had not denied it.

Did June really know? Perhaps Mrs. Delmore had not had a chance to explain the incriminating circumstances that surrounded her exit from the library.

That is another thing for me to find out," Peter told himself. The mysteries are piling on thicker than ever. It is only one o'clock now—three hours to daylight!

Bianca interrupted his musings:

"Are we to remain here?" she asked crisply.

"Of course not," returned Peter; "we are going to seek Mrs. Delmore."

"A useless search!" laughed Bianca. "Nevertheless, please to lead the way, Mr. Cable, we may come upon some of my own people, for whose safety I am equally anxious!"

"I beg your pardon, Miss Weems; I had not heard you express any concern over them. I thought they must be quite safe. Where did you leave them?"

"We all scattered in the upper corridor of this house when the lights went out."

"Upon this house, repeated Peter.

"Are we not in Biddlestone Hall?"

Bianca laughed.

"We are in the east half of the mansion. You did not know that Biddlestone Hall was built as a home by twin brothers—Joshua and Joseph Biddlestone. It is a twin establishment in every way: two separate houses, with only two secret doors connecting them. The arrangement of rooms, same furnishings, same circular staircases, same everything except that the brother did not look in the least alike, and in disposition they were quite opposite.

"Uncle Joseph was an adventurer and a world-wide traveler; he seldom occupied his house until a few years before his death. [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] Joseph had secluded himself at the Hall with his two [illegible] servants.

"My mother was their sister and it was her suggestion that we come to the Hall and surprise Uncle Joshua on his birthday; he does not like Alfred Griswold, and he fancies that we and Alfred are after his money—it is quite absurd!" Bianca laughed unreality.

"So your Uncle Joseph is dead?" asked Peter, trying to piece the scraps of information into a whole fabric.

"Yes. Uncle Joshua wrote us some five years ago all about it, but he said it would be useless and unnecessary to come on from Kansas to the funeral—so we did not come."

"How you ever been in Biddlestone Hall before?"

Bianca hesitated; then, finding Peter's brown eyes very keen and penetrating, she admitted:

"Once, several years ago, when Uncle Joshua was visiting mother. Mr. Biddlestone was attending some scientific club's reunion in New York, mother and I—and Alfred—came down and stopped in Uncle Joseph's house for several weeks."

"You explored it thoroughly, then?" asked Peter.

Bianca colored and nodded. "Of course," she said, hastily.

"Did you ever see this temple before?"

"No. It must have been arranged after Uncle Joseph's death, for Mother we heard some rumor to the effect that Uncle Joseph had become a disciple of Buddhism, but he and Uncle Joshua had quarreled about it."

"We are in Uncle Joseph's house, now, I presume?" said Peter, slowly.

"Yes."

"Then the first thing to do is to get back to the other house; the mystery started there—perhaps we can begin to unravel it from that point. I must have entered this house by the door and a closet in the library—we will go back the same way."

Without a word the two girls accompanied him from the temple to the darker passage outside and to the darkest stairs. Peter, with Bianca behind, a girl by either hand and in this manner they kept together all along the dark, long, uncanny passage to the corresponding unlighted duplex house.

Without a word Peter led them through the rooms and led them through long carpeted areas, which she explained were drawing-rooms and corridors, until at last they reached the [illegible] circular staircase. Here they halted.

"I can lead you through another exit to the library," said Bianca. "It is through the sitting-room on the next floor; that is the way we came when we surprised Uncle Joshua. WHAT IS THAT she screamed in sudden fear.

The three wanderers in the darkness saw a ray of light flicking out of the gloom above.

Some one was coming slowly down the [illegible] stairs. "Fred, is that you?" I held in a strong hand, throwing a [illegible] circle of yellow light over the [illegible] stairs.

The candlelight threw into strong relief the pallid, wrinkled face and [illegible] figure. A shoeless foot stained with blood and whose eyes stared unseeing before him. A striped silk dressing-gown flapped about his ankles and beneath the dressing-gown was a glimpse of a blood-stained shirtfront and rumpled black evening clothes.

As the awful form neared them, Peter recognized with a sort of queer horror that this was the man he had known as Joshua Biddlestone. However, he took off the candlestick from the [illegible] bearing arm around the trembling girls.

Bianca hid her face and moaned pitifully.

"My God! It is Uncle Joshua—and I was murdered hours ago in the library!"

CHAPTER IX.

SUNSHINE AFTER ALL.

AT BIANCA'S scream of terror the figure on the stairs stood stock still for a moment; then it came down with hurried, shuffling steps. There was light in the blue eyes now and a pitiful eagerness, as if he was glad to see them.

"Thank God!" he quavered; "I have tried to find some one to help me, but every one flees before me as if I were a ghost! Is that you, Bianca? And you, June Delmore? Ah, girl, you have been a dreadful night!" He shuddered and sighed. "Peter Cable, your welcome to Biddlestone Hall has been a strange one, sir!"

"I am sorry that it has proved so disturbing to your household, Mr. Biddlestone. We thought you were dead, and we were startled to what seemed to be some [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] reason caused the other members of your household to flee from you. What can we do to help you?"

The two girls had put forth timid fingers and discovered that it was indeed Joshua Biddlestone, in the flesh; then they tenderly supported the old man on either side while Peter took the candlestick from his trembling hand.

[illegible] [illegible] Mr. Biddlestone, [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

The Most Jealous Woman.

"Twas at the masked ball:
Ruffles and battlesx festoons were the chief note in the decorative scheme.
Mrs. Mulligar Tawns, the most jealous woman of our set, turned green under neath her mask.
[illegible]
If I catch him actually flirting."
[illegible]
Jim strolled over to her.
"Oh, beautiful one—for I know you are beautiful even though your features are hidden—he began with a few but not common bow.
"If he but knew!" she thought greedily. "Oh, but I will make him rue this [illegible]
[illegible] man in mauve. And he bowed suddenly ever and kissed one of her two cheeks. A wild, baleful light sprang into her eyes.

Jones—How long will it take those seeds to come up?
Seed Merchant—"Do your neighbors keep hens?"
Jones—Yes.
Merchant—"Not very long."

A Nocturnal Doubt.

Mr. Hicks (at a boarding house)—"Hark! I hear a strange kind of scratching under the bed."
Mr. Parlow How—"So do I. Strike a light and I see what it is that eat or something."

Enjoyed a Joke.

Jones—I can't tell you what you can't tell except Willie Green, who was standing a man across who enjoys a good joke better than I do.
Brown—I can't tell you. I have heard it myself.
"At the head end of the rear car, you tell the same joke forty times, and he can," answered Willie.

Tributaries.

The conversation was about the bright sayings of the rising generation, and Congressman George W. Burgess of Texas was reminded of an incident happening in a public school.
One day the teacher was instructing [illegible] books while she asked a few questions
"Johnny," said she, beginning with a bright-faced youngster, "what is the name of the principal river in Egypt?"
"Yes, Willie," was the easy rejoinder of Johnny.
"That's right," returned the teacher, encouragingly. "Now, please give me the name of the Nile's two tributaries."
"Juveniles, Miss Mary," answered Johnny.

A Slow Traveler.

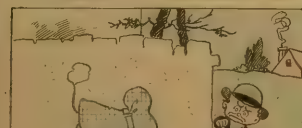
A California youngster had been permitted to visit a neighbor on the strict condition that he should leave there at five o'clock. He did not arrive home until six, and was severely scolded and angry. The youngster insisted, however, that he had left at the proper time, but he couldn't understand why he was late.
"You must have stopped on the way, sonny," suggested his father.
"No, I didn't, papa," sobbed the boy. "Charlie Wilson gave me a white marble, and I was afraid to run it—so I led it home."

The Captain's Company.

A young woman of a Western town desired to show some kindness to a young officer of the militia to whom she had taken a fancy. She therefore dispatched this note:
"Mrs. Smythe requests the pleasure of Captain White's company at a reception on Friday evening."
A prompt reply came which read:
"With the exception of three men who are sick, Captain White's company accept your kind invitation and will come with pleasure to your reception Friday evening."

Scotch Thrift.

An illustration of thrift is contained in the story of a businessman who had been presented a present of a new [illegible] Before she made the purchase the benefactor called and asked the good woman, "Would you rather have a clock or a gold-headed Mrs. Macfee?"
"Well, well Mr. Macfee," I think I'll tak' a stroke ass. It'll make a mouthful fo the coo when I'm dead an' [illegible]



The Lover—"Ah, fickle, fickle woman! Shall I treat her wi' silent contempt or [illegible]

Little Sister Tells a Secret.

The advanced maiden was out rowing with a youthful suitor, and had taken little sister along, who was exhibiting much fear at the waves.
"Why, Martha, if you are so nervous now, what will you be at my age?"
"Thirty-nine, I suppose," meekly replied little sister.

A Little Girl's Fear.

"I am not afraid of the dark, mamma," "No, of course not, dear."
"I was a little afraid once when I went into the pantry to get a tart."
"What were you afraid of?"
"I was afraid I could not find the tart."

Didn't Need It.

"Bolan never takes a vacation," thundered the evangelist.
"Well," retorted an congregerate listener, "he's more used to heat than we are."

The Barefoot Boy—"Aww, Tommy, wot does it take ter off?"

Captain and Mate.

"Dearest," said the sentimental bridegroom, after the wedding ceremony, "do you think that I'll prove to be a satisfactory mate?"
"Oh, I guess you'll do all right," responded the practical bride; "and now look me over and tell me what you think don't, it should be [illegible] describe you at the meeting of the [illegible] office to-night. I'm going to [illegible] cook."

Plenty of Experience.

The chef was interviewing the young man who had applied for work.
"Have you had any experience in the lunch business?" he asked.
"Why, I should say so," replied the energetic youth. "I've been lunching for almost twenty years."

Attractive Advertising.

Customer—"I see you advertise bicycles from fifteen dollars to one hundred dollars."
Dealer—"Yes, sir."
Customer—"Will you please tell me the best kind of bicycle do you sell for ten cents?"
Dealer—"Candy ones."

Mighty Lucky.

"Is dem you-all's chickens?"
"Yaas, dey my-all's chickens. Whose chickens did you s'pose dey was?"
"I wuzn' s'posin' nuffin about 'em. But I will say dat it's mighty lucky dat a chicken wuz come a-runnin' an' a-wuzzin' his gin' its tail when its regular owner me whistles, same as a dog."

An Inning for Each.

Blaks—"Hotel servants are very honest. They treatment of one another."
Jinks—"How so?"
Blaks—"Quirk no you he one he dupes, so as to give his comrades a chance."

Too Near Home.

Ella Flances—"Tell me, Count, why do you always kiss my left hand?"
The Count—"Are you not lefthanded?"
Ella Flances—"Yes, I am."
The Count—"Then that is so hand with which you sign se checks, is it not?"—Puck

How It Happened.

"Yes, my brother lives in Boston."
"How did he happen to settle so far away from you?"
"Why, you know the streets of Boston are rather [illegible]
"Well, I've heard so."
"My brother went there once on a visit. When he started to leave he hunted the railroad station [illegible] fully for two years. By that time he had got used to the place, so he just concluded to settle down."

Jane Learned Her Lesson.

Mistress—"Jane, you must not talk to me in the rude way you do. You must learn to speak properly; you must say, 'If you please, madam,' and sometimes 'ma'am' for the most part 'mum,' and when speaking to the master you must say 'sir' instead."
Jane a few days after went to her mistress in a great hurry.
"If you please, madam, and sometimes ma'am, and the most part mum, sir's fell down in a fit."

Wanted to Be Forewarned.

Senator Brook complained in Washington of an underhand effort which was being made in certain quarters to defeat his recent bill.
"I would like to feel a little more frankness in the air," said the Senator. [illegible] and thank no low miner of a common Cuban.
[illegible]
Finger Sam or Crimson Gulch.
"Do you think it is possible for a man to get in his store stereos and sidewards all day?"
"Yes, sir," answered Sam, "and maybe he'll be for your own good to remind you that the Peter steerios a man lies on when he place cards about here the less home he is so far under suspicion."

A Late Business Call.

"Certone what men will do when [illegible] and [illegible] "Tim" Sullivan. "In New York I heard a story about a feller who knew he had been out to catch all night, and so he considered the morns for wear.
He came along at the breakfast table and [illegible] with a plate full [illegible] "Mary," he called the waitress down to the [illegible] "What do you want?"
"Nothing in particular," the chap replied, only I want to say to you that when the last man I'll do business with."

A Reasonable Explanation.

Leader (reading Partyer)—"I have proved that this horse is St Blic's, and that he is [illegible] Have you anything to say before we string yeh up?"
Horse Thief—"The cyclone disappeared the night o' the cyclone, didn't he?"
"Yaas."
"Well, I happened along about that time, and th' cyclone blew the horses out o' the barn and I became most six miles, and when I came to my senses I was forty miles away."
"Well, that's reasonable. Beg pardon for suspectin' yeh."

More Than Ever.

"It seems to me," said the customer to his barber, "that you ought to lower your price for a shave in these hard times."
The barber shook his head sadly, and said:
"Can't be done. Nowadays everybody wears such a long face that we have a great deal more work to shave over."

What He Meant.

Young Reporter—"The storm king hurled his terrific scowlings terrific over the ruins of the broken and dismembered cities."
Old Editor—"What's that? What do you mean, young fellow?"
Young Reporter—"I — er — the flood washed away Pat McCann's cowshed."

Changed Views.

"Time makes a big difference."
"What are you thinking of?"
"My wife's father. I used to think him a stubborn old cuss. Now I respect his judgment."
"What happened?"
"Nothing, only he died and left me [illegible]

An Excellent Reason.

"Tell me, Count, why do you always kiss my left hand?"
The Count—"Are you not leftHanded?"
Ella Flances—"Yes, I am."
The Count—"Then that is se hand with which you sign se checks, is it not?"—Puck

A Reluctant Admission.

"Mother"
"What is it, dear?"
"Are you a woman being?"
"Yes, of course, my darling."
"Then a human being?"
"Certainly, love."
"Is the other a human being?"
"Well, yes, I suppose so."

Brown—"Do Jones believe that prayer is answered directly?"
Smith—"Why, his faith in prayer is abundant that every time he prays for a thing he gets it directly."

A Hard Task.

An [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

Aaron Lapwing's Genius

Or, For the Princess Herodias

By Leonard Britten

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CHAPTER XVIII.

AN'S DEMAND.

THE herald snatched at the idle of Sutcliffe's horse just in time to prevent the rider from aiming a biting blow at Roddy's head. At the same instant the bugles sounded again, and Prince Herod, standing up in his place, uttered a shout and pointed out across the plains. Instantly all was confusion in the grandstand. All interest in the tournament was forgotten, and men and women, standing up in their seats, looked out over the meadows toward the distant mountains, shouting excitedly.

Sutcliffe dismounted and stood facing Roddy for a moment, while the herald pulled a silk pennon from his belt. Seeing the gesture of his mailed foe, he suffered himself to be led away.

The herald shouted to Roddy and indicated to him to follow. Roddy got down from his horse and strolled across the green. At the foot of the grandstand he encountered Lady Alice. He was amazed and horrified at the expression upon her face. Tears of terror rings round her eyes; she seemed to have lived through an eternity of anguish. But she smiled up bravely at Roddy.

"I am so proud, so proud of you, my dear! You fought so well and finely," she said. "I prayed for you to win."

"To win, Alice?" asked Roddy.

She slipped her arm through his mailed one. The pressure of her hand on his side overwhelmed him with emotion. It was not the intoxication of the senses that he had once felt in the presence of Herodias, but something far deeper, truer, and infinitely more sacred.

They mounted the grandstand together, pushing past the shouting, gesticulating crowds until they reached a point near the topmost tier of seats. They found themselves beside Prince Herod and Sutcliffe, who were talking eagerly together. Roddy had already noticed that Sutcliffe had a fluent command of the Albanian language, now he realized that this fact made his enmity far more dangerous.

Sutcliffe saw him and swung round.

"Another time, Monbodkin," he said, in a threatening tone. "Our quarrel has still to be settled, and it shall be settled!"

"When you are ready," answered Roddy, with affected indifference.

But the knight refused to go through another bout with Sutcliffe was not an enticing one. He was weary abroad to death, and he began to become conscious that his whole body was bruised from the blows he had received. It is hard to fight when victory means defeat, and to fight well when defeat means victory. Yet he made no sign.

He wanted only to live thus, with Lady Alice beside him, and he shrank from danger now that he had made life a thing of wonderful worth.

g looked out over the plains and per-

little more than half a mile away, avalcade of horsemen, clad in armor, was advancing upon the castle. Perhaps there were a score men. They carried lances with pen at the end, and small round banner fluttered briskly in the descending sun.

Suddenly the masses on the grandstand broke into shouts of triumph. At the first it was not because of the armored men who rode so slowly toward them upon their heavy steeds. Roddy perceived that a second detachment was emerging through the mountain cleft

them. And it could be seen that the second detachment was a veritable army. They must have numbered several hundred. They spread across the plain as they wound out of the pass, advancing in military formation, in the form squares. A single armored knight rode at the head of each, a tiny speck of reflected sunlight.

Prince Herod swung round and, with his arms raised shouted a command. Instantly the spectators sprang from the grandstand and began running back toward the castle walls pell-mell. Knights and ladies, archers and men-at-arms, pages and halberdiers ran toward safety. The tilting-ground was completely deserted. The empty tents and the gaudy benches were mute witnesses of what had occurred. The fugitives, sweeping across the bridge, had spanned the moat, gained the protection of the walls.

Roddy and Lady Alice were the last to enter. They saw the iron steps rise in the rear of the granite structure and entered the little tower.

Inside the walls all was confusion. Pages were running to and fro with flags, staggering under the weight of their monsters armor. Archers were carrying long bows and their quivers full of sheaves of arrows in quivers bobbed upon their backs as they moved toward the battlements. The gates of the outer doublets stood before the kneeling pages, who adjusted their greaves and fastened breastplate and habergeon.

Mounting the walls, their leather jackets tightly buttoned, the archers seated themselves on their bows and tried their fingers, adjusted, and began fitting arrows to them.

The walls were manned before the cavalcade was within two hundred yards of the moat. The archers stood, fingers on strings, their bows bent and arrows ready to let fly. From their post in the tower, which was unoccupied by any of the defenders, Roddy and Lady Alice could see into the tower nearest, over the gate.

Prince Herod stood there with Sutcliffe and a small group of his officers. Inside the tower were also two guards, standing at the entrance, manned by means of which the chains that controlled the drawbridge were wound or unwound.

Prince Herod shouted, and the winches clanked, the chains creaked, and, groaning and protesting, the bridge rose slowly from the moat, till it had assumed a vertical position against the walls, its further end adjacent to the top of the tower.

Meanwhile the main body of those approaching, moving more swiftly than the vanguard of armored knights, had drawn nearer the castle. Roddy could now discerned that each man carried a long bow upon his back. Behind them rolled chariot-like wagons, piled high with ample train. There could be little doubt that the approaching forces had come with hostile purpose.

The vanguard halted, and from their ranks a single knight rode out toward the castle, accompanied by a page, who held a banner above his head. At the sight of this flag a long, resonant yell of fury rolled from the castle walls.

The page set a horn to his lips and blew a loud, challenging blast. Then the knight shouted something in Albanian. From his post within the entrance tower Prince Herod replied in a voice of passion that sounded like the call of a bull. The rider turned to ride. And then Prince Herod answered him. Then the rider unfastened the strap that held his helmet, and, seized bareheaded upon his horse, he cried again. A third time the old man's hoarse answer of defiance rang through the valley.

Donning his helmet, the knight rode back to his troop, and the whole body, turning their horses' heads, rode slowly away. Five hundred yards behind the moat the main body of the invaders had halted.

The knights dismounted. The wagons rolled slowly up to them, and within a few minutes the white sides of canvas tents had begun to rise in the air. The invaders spread out along the valley, till the castle was three parts encircled.

With a loud, creaking noise, which ended in a crash, the portcullis fell, its iron-tipped beams projecting before the castle gate like an aerial chevaux-de-frise.

An archer upon the wall fitted an arrow to his bow and drew the cord. The pliant wood curved back, the right arm bent itself into a sinewy mass of muscle, the left arm became like stone, and with a twang the winged messenger of war spun into the air.

Roddy turned to Lady Alice. "Did you recognize the face of the knight who spoke to Prince Herod?" he asked.

"Yes," she answered. "It was Prince Hassan."

The leader of the Mohammedan branch of the Mahsori tribe had come to reclaim the Princess and wreak vengeance upon his hereditary enemy.

As Lady Alice ended Sutcliffe entered the tower, accompanied by four guards. He approached Lady Alice. "I have to inform you," he said coldly, "that Prince Herod wishes you to remain within your room inside the keep. He is afraid that I cannot guarantee your safety otherwise."

"Tell his highness that I shall remain by Mr. Nicholson," the girl answered with spirit.

Roddy saw Sutcliffe's stern features relax. It seemed almost startled by her words. And it was clear to the least observant, both from her manner and from the scarn color that dyed her face, that she had a shame in her love, nor need for secrecy.

And Roddy guessed that Sutcliffe's hatred of him was dictated less by the belief that he loved Herodias than by humiliation. Sutcliffe must have known that Roddy was being forced into the marriage with the Princess; but he could not forgive the man who publicly insulted him in Herodias threw herself into Roddy's arms at the Gates of the Kiephis.

"Mr. Nicholson," said Sutcliffe, turning to Roddy with a sneer, "I have no instructions concerning you. But doubtless you will be able to compose an account of your experiences more comfortably with seven feet of stone wall between you and the arrows of the enemy. If you will accompany Lady Alice to her apartment for the present, both her wish and that of his highness will be accomplished."

Roddy, disdaining to reply to the taunt, turned to Lady Alice.

"I think Prince Herod's request is reasonable," he said. "Will you not go within the keep for my sake, dear?"

"If you wish me to," she answered submissively.

Then they crossed the flags together and entered the inner stronghold, followed by the halberdiers.

They traversed the passage and ascended a flight of stone steps which wound round the tower. It was closely packed spiral. Roddy noticed that they seemed to have been constructed recently. There were lumps of mortar among the edges and they were not worn by the feet of those who must have ascended and descended them.

At last they reached the summit. Lady Alice paused. The halberdiers were a little distance behind.

"This is the room they gave me," she said, indicating a heavy oaken door.

Roddy opened it and looked by eide. Evidently there were only two rooms at the top of the keep. At either end was a window, and the window, outside which was a gallery, large enough to support a number of persons. Roddy, approaching the gallery, could see that there were little round openings in the floor of this gallery between the machicolations. He knew the purpose of these. They were for the pouring of boiling lead or oil upon the heads of those attempting to scale the external wall. It was doubtless here that Herodias had learned the trick which she practiced at the Hotel d'Esterfeld.

Roddy drew Lady Alice toward the window.

"Look, dearest!" he said.

From the top of the tower, which dominated the walls, they could see beyond them a forest of tents. Horsemen were riding to and fro, and the greatest bustle in the hostile camp indicated that Prince Hassan did not purpose long to delay his attack.

"Where are our guards?" asked Lady Alice.

The halberdiers had halted near the top of the stone stairway. Suddenly there came the sound of wood sliding on stone. Roddy stared round.

Two immense sliding doors had sprung out of the walls and snapped together. They were completely cut off from the world below.

Roddy leaped at the doors and hammered on them. They were of ancient oak, and strong as iron. They did not budge, nor even quiver under the impact of his mailed fists.

CHAPTER XIX.

IN THE TURRET.

SUDDENLY Roddy ceased beating upon the door and stood still. A death-like hush had succeeded the din. The walls went round and round. He sank down on his knees, toppled over and fell to the stone floor, almost unconscious.

In the excitement of the afternoon he had not thought of the buffetings he

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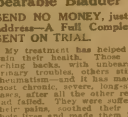

STOPS BACKACHE

If you have backache, kidney, bladder trouble or rheumatism, you need not suffer another day, nor another night, if you will send and burns in passing, if there is sediment or brick dust in the urine, if the bladder is irritated without a minute's delay.

I know you want to be well and strong again, so you can work, and walk, without pain, so you can sleep without disturbance, and wake up refreshed and rested, able to use your body and mind with a zest and joy in your [illegible] suffering misery all the time.

[illegible] Lexoid was uric acid, rheumatic, muscle, strength, health and energy and encourage the kidneys to properly filter the blood.

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Take it when it comes. Use half of it, and see just what it does. Then, if you are satisfied it is helping you, when you know you are getting better, and want to continue, send an amount within your easy reach—an amount you can spare—and receive the rest. In all I ask I know you'll be willing to do your part when it helps you. Otherwise your word is good enough for me. Try it first, pay afterwards when you know it helps you. When you have used half of it, if you are not satisfied, return what's left and pay nothing. Don't send [illegible] time this.

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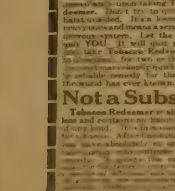

Any form of tobacco in any form conquered—user taking Tobacco Redeemer. Don't try to quit unaided. Harmless. It is a scientific substitute—different from all others. Destroys all craving for tobacco in any form after first one to three days. It is impossible for any user of tobacco to continue the habit after using Tobacco Redeemer according to simple directions. Let the Redeemer help you. It will quit you, if you will quit using Tobacco. Don't continue to be a slave. Don't lose your self-respect. Don't offend others. Don't contract disease. Don't shorten your life. Don't be nervous, irritable, weak, despondent. Don't be unable to concentrate your mind on your work. Don't be constipated. Don't have a pale, sickly complexion. Don't have a bad breath. Don't have foul stomach. Don't have indigestion. Don't have sore mouth. Don't have a coated tongue. Don't have a dull, stupid appearance. Don't have a lack of ambition. Don't have a loss of memory. Don't have a lack of energy. 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had received, nor of the weight of his armor. The climb up the steep stairway had taken the last of his reserve strength. He lay on the floor helpless.

Through the clouds of semi-consciousness he was dimly aware that Lady Alice was kneeling at his side. Her practical hands tended him; she moved his breast-piece and, running into her room, returned with a ewer of water, with which she bathed his face and hands.

All through this period of intense weakness she kneeled at his side, unflinching in the care of him, and when at last reason resumed her sway, and Roddy awoke to the full light of consciousness, she collapsed as suddenly as he had done, a huddled heap, before him.

Then it was his turn to revive her, and, terrified at her white face and colorless lips he snatched her into his arms and swore she should not die, and kissed her so ardently that at last he brought the blood back to her cheeks, which began to glow more red than he had ever seen them before.

As he took off his bracelets a piece of flimsy metal dropped from his right hand. Roddy looked at it for a second or two before he remembered what it was. It was Lady Alice's left gauntlet glove. Had Herodias given it to Sutcliffe? Had the volatile Princess transferred her affections? Had the world hope surged through Roddy's heart. How else could Sutcliffe have obtained it, save by the Princess' bounty?

He unbuckled his greaves also. His whole body was bruised and blackened from the effects of his fall, and it felt as though weighted with lead.

He laid his sword by and went into the second room of the suite, sank into a chair, and a table, the latter unmistakably modern. Upon the table was a week's supply of Sutcliffe's meals, containing a quantity of lard sufficient to keep them fresh for a long period, butter in new tins, a pound of preserves, and five cans of corned beef!

So Aaron Lapwing had been at work here! Then Sutcliffe was not instrumental in the bringing about of these adventures!

Roddy went out to Lady Alice. She was standing before the narrow slit of a window. A shaft of light from the setting sun fell through it, like a beam of gold

Down in the flagged courtyard, far beneath them, a little fresh water lying a dozen sleek oxen to water at a well. Evidently Prince Herod was not unprepared for a siege, for just such a contingency as had arisen.

The walls were bare, but every little tower contained its rifle-pit, and room to man the battlements at an attack. Roddy could see them moving behind the loopholes. Sir Aaron Lapwing's voice heard their voices float up through the still air. Five hundred yards beyond the moat two sentries were pacing to and fro. They were massed especially before the gate, and seemed to be gathered round some object on the ground, a prairie schooner, much elongated, and having a flat roof of some dark material instead of white. It was a homely little scene seemed more than ever unreal to Roddy. He put his arm about Lady Alice's waist.

"Do you know, dear, there is something wrong about this siege," he said reflectively. "I can't put my finger on it in his mind lay stubbornly just back of his consciousness, and he could not grasp it.

"I mean, dear," he continued, "that it seems too peaceful for a siege. There didn't appear to be any terror on the part of the ladies, either. Either they have the most marvelous courage, or—or Prince Herod's plans to surrender, just as he did his yacht."

But that was not the idea that receded down the long ancestral corridors as Roddy grasped at it

"I believe, Alice," he continued, "that there is some subtle, elemental currents of everything that has befallen us, from the fire which I am sure he started on the train down to the tournament. Why, he has even placed cans of meat—corned beef from Chicago—on the table. There's enough for a week's supply of food for us. Then he means to keep us here for a week. He must have something, something, including our imprisonment here."

"I don't care, Roddy," answered Lady Alice, "so long as we have each other."

Roddy kissed her. And somehow they did not care at all that they were shut up there on the top of the keep, aloof from all the world.

Then Roddy took her by the hands and looked into her gray eyes.

"Alice, I feel like a fool," he said. "We are both the puppets of that amazing man, and I am perfectly helpless in his hands. Do you know anything of Lapwing's history? Some day I will tell you about him. He is a genius, and yet he lacks the most vital sense of perspective. He may have brought us here and engineered everything for the most unequivocal purpose—say in order to be best man at a wedding. Perhaps he has never had the chance to be best man at a wedding.

"Of course the idea sounds extravagant, Alice," he went on. "But if you know Lapwing you would not be surprised at anything he does. There are no ruts in his mind; he strikes out through a wilderness of new ideas each time he plans. Suppose, for instance, that he intended to be best man at my wedding with the Princess, and that all his maneuvers have been directed toward that purpose?"

"Then," answered Lady Alice triumphantly, "he shall be best man at ours instead."

"You will marry me, dearest?"

"Yes," answered Lady Alice.

"As soon as we can get out of here? And you will give up your project for uplifting the Ancient Britons?"

Lady Alice sighed a little, for that idea was still strong in her, and, with British tenacity, she did not want to change her determination. There was just a moment of hesitation. Then:

"Yes," Roddy's ear whispered.

"Then," he answered, "I am going to contrive for us to get out of here as quickly as we can, and thank Heaven I have at least that sword."

"And I have my pistol," answered Lady Alice.

Roddy started back with dismay. He had left his pistols, both the one Sutcliffe had given him and that which he had received from Lady Alice, in the suit that he had discarded in the room below.

But Lady Alice did not ask him what he had done with hers. Her faith and trust alone, and perhaps also her self-confidence had been formerly

Roddy bent down and picked up the blade. Even in the dim light, his eyes been turned by the hammering upon Sutcliffe's armor. It was amazing that the art of sword-making should have attained such perfection in Albania, even though one would reasonably expect to find such work in Toledo.

As Roddy scanned the sword he deciphered a faint and very fine engraving upon the blade. Under the hilt, he read it with some difficulty. The words were:

"Made in Birmingham."

He looked at Lady Alice He did not tell her of that discovery But after that sentence he added, cheerfully.

"Roddy," said Lady Alice suddenly, "I am so thirsty. And I used up all the water in the ewer."

"I'll get you some," Roddy answered

He went into his room, but there was no water in the suite. Below back he met Lady Alice in the passage

"There isn't any in my room," she said.

They looked at each other in growing consternation

"But there must be a supply of water somewhere," said Roddy. "I wonder how they manage."

"Under the moat are water pipes—" Lady Alice began. Then, "Roddy, how could there be water up here?" she added, "that would require a reservoir high up in the hills somewhere, with water pipes. Isn't there a barrel anywhere?"

They searched their rooms again, but there was no barrel. And Roddy was convinced by their search that there also

"They can't have forgotten that!" he said.

"There must be water," said Lady Alice with finality.

The passage was short and rather wider than that of the main hotel. The walls were of stone, block laid on block; it was impossible that any secret door could exist there. And there was no place in the passage where even an umbrella could have been hidden, much less a barrel of water.

The two rooms were almost alike in construction and size, and identically furnished. There was not even a closet. The floors were of smoothed stone. The walls were similar to those of the passage without

They came back and stood looking anxiously at each other. "Perhaps somebody will bring us water," said Roddy.

But he knew that the hope was a very faint one. They had contrived their imprisonment, whether Lapwing, Sutcliffe or the Prince, had foreseen their need for water. They must have occurred to him as a more vital necessity

"It can't be Prince Herod," said Roddy. "Least of all he was a smile as my prospective father-in-law. He wouldn't have changed so quickly. Sutcliffe—"

"Is an Englishman and a gentleman," said Lady Alice. "Dismiss him from your mind."

"Yes," agreed Roddy. "It is that infernal Aaron Lapwing, and he wants to make us suffer for some unfathomed purpose of his own. And when I catch him again I'll wring his neck for him."

But the light was dimly concealed the seriousness of their predicament. And, as they discussed the situation, it began to grow dark.

In the failing light Roddy set to work to examine the doors. The most cursory investigation revealed the impossibility of forcing them. Sliding out from the wall, they left no hinge or pivot against which an attack could be made. The central cleft, where they met, was unassailable, and Roddy surmised that this part was protected from behind by means of bolts.

The hard oak was like iron against the sword. Roddy could do no more than scratch the surface.

After a while he desisted, and they sat down on the stone floor before the

(Continued on page seventeen.)

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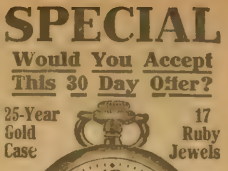

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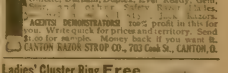

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Aaron Lapwing's Genius

(Continued from page fifteen.)

window and waited. There was nothing else to do, and neither felt like sleeping in such a predicament.

"Roddy, dear," said Lady Alice presently, as she nestled up to him, "I think I can throw a little light on the situation, by telling you something that I didn't want you to know."

Roddy looked at her inquiringly.

"You didn't know what Prince Hassan shouted to Prince Herod outside the walls this afternoon, did you, dear?"

"I suppose it was a summons to surrender, and give up the Princess Herodias," answered Roddy.

"And me, dear," said Lady Alice.

"What!" shouted Roddy, springing to his feet.

"He demanded that I should be surrendered, too. He used to pass by my window on the yacht and ogle me. He is a Mohammedan, you know. So perhaps Prince Herod means to let me live here, as though by an oversight, so as to clear himself of complicity in my death, and give us time to avoid bringing down on his head the anger of the British Government by surrendering me. That is the way the Oriental mind works, Roddy."

She rested her head on his shoulder and gave way to tears. It was the first weakness that Roddy had seen in her. But then, it is hard to contemplate death when one loves and is loved.

CHAPTER XX.

THE WELL.

IT WAS amazing that Roddy had not noticed it before!

He was not three strides away from Lady Alice. He had begun to pace the passage, and now as he looked into his room, he perceived the ring in the stone floor distinctly, beneath his bed.

Then he understood why he had not seen it previously. The declining sun had thrown the shadow of the table under the bed; and it was in the same pale twilight existed everywhere within the room.

Roddy stooped down and tugged at the ring. It was not set by disuse into the granite; he felt the stone give, a little each time that he would contrive their escape through the secret passage which evidently existed there. One does not set a ring in a stone for no purpose, any more than in a bull's nose.

But he would explore the place alone and abstain from raising false hopes which might not be fulfilled.

He went back where Lady Alice crouched before the western window.

"You had better go to bed, dear," he said to her. "You need to save strength for the future. Perhaps one of the guards will come:—"

She rose obediently and put her arms about his neck.

"Good night, beloved," she murmured.

Roddy, as soon as she had entered her room and closed the door, shifted the bed from its position against the wall. It was a wooden bed, evidently a genuine antique, and had probably stood there since the fifteenth century. It could not be moved by merely a genuine antique, and had probably stood there since the fifteenth century. It could not be moved by merely a gentle push, for the iron had long ago rusted away, and the claw feet parted from the stone with a reluctant sigh, leaving four little piles of dirt behind them.

Then, setting his aching shoulders to his task, Roddy tugged at the ring, putting every ounce of his strength into the work. The stone began to yield. One corner emerged from the level, sank back; another corner appeared; and suddenly Roddy was upon his back, with the immense stone on top of him. Beneath it was a black cavern. Roddy took out his pocket-knife and let it fall. He waited, listening. Some seconds must have passed before he heard the splash of water.

Satisfied that there was a well beneath, he proceeded to remove the stone adjacent. Presently a rounding arm, all much smaller than the central one, and had evidently been moved recently, for Roddy found the task the slightest difficulty in his task.

But, as he proceeded, pulling up the stones much as one plucks to pieces a puzzle of wooden blocks, he perceived, with growing horror, that the removable stones extended on each side about a foot further than the edge of the bed.

In other words, the well had once been a trap for the unwary death-trap, and the well, no doubt, the grave of many a knightly guest who had been accommodated with lodgings in the caste of Herod's forebears.

When Roddy had removed enough of the stone blocks to permit his descent he felt in his pocket for a match.

He had left his matches in his other suit. He had provided all such that only pockets in the abbreviated trousers, which were about the size of bathing drawers, and padded out to resemble a miniature balloon.

Still, though this situation was annoying, there must certainly be some means of descending. Roddy put his foot down and felt around the inner edge of the orifice. At the second essay he rested it upon a shelf in the side of the well. Then, cautiously groping with each foot alternately, he lowered himself twenty feet down a succession of solid footholds in the rock. At this point he remembered that he had brought no vessel to hold the water.

When he returned to his room it was almost dark. A hasty search in the obscurity revealed to him that there was no vessel capable of containing anything. The ewer was in Lady Alice's room, and Roddy must have parted with the water before he awakened her.

Then his hand slipped over the butter, and the memory of the tin cup used in the public drinking cup in New York State came to him. Removing the waxed paper which covered the butter, he took a couple of cups about as large as he thought it possible to make them without the aid of a lathe or power machine.

Five minutes later he was clinging to the wall by one hand and foot and satisfying the parching thirst with the sweetest drink that he had ever tasted, with the possible exception of his first drink on shipboard after Aaron Lapwing had kidnaped him.

And then, as he was about to scramble up with the cups, he suddenly realized that a man cannot carry two cupfuls of water and also ascend a ladder, he saw something else to do with the heating violently. Six feet above the level of the water, within an easy step of the door, was a stone ledge, which was a wide ledge of rock, disclosing the mouth of a tunnel large enough to creep through.

Instantly Roddy had emptied the precious water back into the well, and, with the cups thrust in his trousers pocket, he had sprung to the shelf and begun to traverse the passage cautiously, his head bent low and his arms extended on either side of him.

The passage was not a natural one. It must have been excavated with pick, and the crude beginnings of gunpowder, some time in the Middle Ages. Sometimes it narrowed so that a stouter man than Roddy would have had difficulty in making his way here and there, presumably where the primitive engineers had set off their discharges. It widened so that he could stand upright.

It seemed hours that he traveled: it might have been actually an hour before the rock changed suddenly to earth, propped up by ancient timber—cypress, or some long-lived wood, Roddy thought from his boyish experience spent that filled the passage. And then he saw something like a candle far in front of him.

He crouched, perfectly still, waiting in the darkness. He could not afford to discard his only weapon, Lady Alice was dependent on him alone. He would have run from a child with a toy sword at that moment.

But the candle did not advance, neither did it recede. It did not flicker, either. Because a candle should. Roddy advanced cautiously. Then he discovered that the candle was a star. And, a couple of minutes later, he had squeezed out of what looked like a fox-hole in a little elevation in the plain. The evening star shone unswervingly before his eyes, and under it, not half a mile away, Roddy could just discern the white array of Hassan's camp.

The secret passage, built for flight by the ancestors of Prince Herod, had served exactly for that purpose. But doubtless the knowledge of it had disappeared from among the castle inhabitants, or perhaps Roddy would have been locked into the keep with Lady Alice. Probably in the turbulent times that had existed since the end of the Crusades in the Middle Ages, there had been a dozen different branches of the Mallasori clan that would have found a stronghold, and such a secret, never known to more than two or three at a time, might have died out in the hundred battlefields.

Roddy's heart thumped in his breast, and he caught himself singing for pure joy at the escape of the proximity of Hassan and his men. For he knew that the road southward lay open, and he did not doubt that either Lady Alice or he would be stopped by the men of the Kleiphts, when they had ridden through all Herod's guests.

The tune that Roddy sang was a popular one in New York about the time of departure. It dealt, crucially, with where husband's a wife, a baby, and Harlem flat.

And Roddy, being a man of domesticity, felt that a flat in Harlem, somewhere One Hundred and Twenty-fifth street, with a kitchenette and an azalea on the fire-escape, and a radiator instead of a little later, would be the height of human aspiration, granted that Alice filled the kitchenette.

But then he had never occupied anything except a house on Madison avenue, which had been left to his parents on Fifty-ninth street, with an occasional suite at a hotel.

As he crept out through the darkness he seemed to see activity in Hassan's camp. He fancied that there was a stir among the men, and even thought the wagons were being shifted. That was all he could see, but he heard the neighing of camels, and once or twice the crack of a whip.

He wondered whether Hassan was contemplating an assault upon the castle. He thought little of this, however, and he cared less. He plunged into the long grass, and began the long crawl that followed was as a pilgrim's joyous ascent to Paradise. And then, at last he reached the wall, and filled the little cup, and began the ascent of the stone steps again, the vision was still there.

As Roddy emerged into his room he thought he heard confused noises in the court below. Mingled with them came the faint tapping of Lady Alice's hand on the outside of his massive oaken door.

He flung it open. She was standing upon the threshold, her face expressive of intense anxiety.

"Roddy!" she cried. "I have been knocking for ever so long. It must be nearly five minutes. I was afraid something had happened to you. I was so frightened!"

"Something has happened," answered Roddy, handling her the improvised cup. "Drink this, and don't mind the butter, sweetheart. When you've emptied it I'll tell you where I got it."

Lady Alice drained the cup, but she did not ask Roddy where he got it. Instead, she pulled him into the passage and toward the western window.

The sounds without had grown into a tumult. Roddy could not discard Roddy that the defense of Prince Herod's castle was no more a jest than the assault on it.

For Hassan's men were swarming along the moat, upon the outer side.

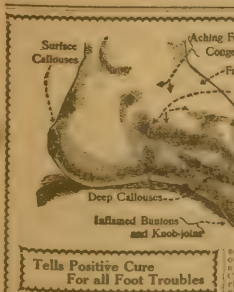
The continuation of this highly interesting story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. Read it. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year.

* * *

Other Ways.

"Must you say 'No'?" he pleaded.

"It is not necessary," she returned sweetly. "I can say 'Most assuredly not.' In fact, there are several ways of expressing the same thought."



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COPIES WEEKLY.

GENTLE JABS

Anyway, peace is worth fighting for.

Some men are too polite to be truthful.

A bad break is often followed by a flood of tears.

The thread of many a discourse is merely a yarn.

Every time you wrong a neighbor you harm yourself.

Life may be a grind, but grinding sharpens things.

Better one boy in a schoolroom than two in a poolroom.

A born diplomat is one who can hide his ignorance behind a smile.

After children grow up their parents often prove a disappointment.

Few women are dangerous—because they usually talk before they act.

Fool relations are almost as easy to accumulate as empty tomato cans.

The man who has a system for beating the races seldom has anything else.

Money you bet on the mare doesn't always push her under the wire first.

Fortunate is the man who really deserves his own good opinion of himself.

Although a fool and his money may be easily separated, they are hard to find.

Many a woman who doesn't know her own mind gives her husband pieces of it.

A hypocrite is a man who acts differently when he knows some one is watching him.

Wine and women get credit for making a fool of many a man who was born that way.

Occasionally we meet a man who looks as if he had tried to preserve his dignity in alcohol.

If a man gets a chance to praise himself he usually makes a noise like a megaphone.

Don't strike a man because you think he is a coward. He may be your equal—and then some.

You may kick, you may shatter a boom if you will, but the hope of a candidate clings to it still.

A married woman is fond of having her own way—and she can't understand why her husband isn't.

It flatters a girl almost as much if a man proposes to her as it does if he has sent her a dollar box of candy.

When a woman has occasion to polish the family silver the chances are she will begin with the small change in her husband's pockets.

A man gets very little exercise when he goes for a walk with his wife on a street where dry goods and millinery show windows abound.

HOME AND HEALTH

Fashion Notes.

Buttons and buttonholes and buttons and loops and buttons with neither are in.

Ready-made clothes bring one to the belief that every other suit is of poplin or gaberdine.

Pinks, white and mauve or orchid tones are repeated more frequently than any other evening shades and some lovely things are shown in opalescent silks.

There are new tawny shades of blue whitened a hint of purple, every shade from Copenhagen to Belgian to midnight or crown blue is widely represented.

Evening frocks in the main are short and full and made of lace or net on taffeta or fallle or chiffon, with occasional handsome brocades, the silver designs or taffetas or faille being still in high favor.

A popular style of military waist is buttoned closely to the throat and the straight collar may be removed and the back made open. The shoulder straps are also optional. The sleeves are requisition, with a fairly deep cuff at the wrist. They may be shortened to the elbow and the patch pocket may be used or omitted.

Health Notes.

The greatest care should be taken of the teeth. Equal parts of castile soap, powdered orris root and precipitated chalk make a good and inexpensive tooth powder.

Nail biting can be cured by will power alone in older girls, but it comes from nervousness. With children dip the ends of the fingers in quinine or a little extract of quinine.

Extreme temperatures should be avoided in the bath. The extremely cold bath often is a shock to the system, and 98 degrees Fahrenheit is a good temperature for the bath, both summer and winter.

You can make a fairly good bath in a sickroom by using an ordinary asbestos stove mat with a ring in it. Twist a piece of wire around the corner, leaving the upper end free, and bend into a hoop shape; then hang the mat to this.

Eat slowly and taste your food well, and it will slide down and give more nourishment than food eaten quickly. Never eat when tired or overwhelmed, but lie down, even if only for a few minutes, before dining.

Recipes.

GRAHAM MUFFINS—Four cups of graham flour, one teaspoon of brown sugar, one teaspoon of salt, three teaspoons of baking powder, one teaspoon of melted butter (or more if you desire), one egg, two cups of sweet milk. Bake in a hot oven fifteen minutes.

KING PUDDING—Two cups bread crumb, one cup sugar, one butter, one-half cup molasses, one egg, one teaspoon of soda, one-half cup sweet milk, one-half teaspoon of salt, one teaspoon of cinnamon, pinch of salt; boil or steam like a loaf of brown bread two hours; serve with lemon or hard sauce.

GINGER SNAPS—One beaten egg, one cupful sugar, one cupful molasses, one tablespoonful of soda, one tablespoonful vinegar, one tablespoonful ginger, flour to make a stiff dough. Roll thin. Bake in a hot oven. Sweetening to taste. The cookies are very brittle at first, but get soft if put away for a day.

VEAL OR MUTTON HASH—Put some cold cooked veal through the food chopper, measure and add an equal quantity of fine stale bread crumbs, season highly with salt, celery salt, paprika, and onion juice, and to each cupful add one tablespoonful of finely chopped parsley and one tablespoonful of melted butter. Moisten with beaten egg, mold into small balls or eggs, and roll in fine bread crumbs. Place in the bottom of a saucepan, half cover with hot stock, cover closely and simmer gently for forty-five minutes.

Needlework.

Many women delight in making patchwork quilts, but few who do will be glad to know that many attractive quilts have been designed from the patterns found in oilcloth.

To prevent the lace yoke of an evening dress from being soiled by contact with the skin, line the yoke by hand with a piece of chiffon. When soiled by perspiration this is easily ripped out and a clean piece substituted.

Keep needles dry and shiny and the thread clean. Have an emery in every working or in the drawer of the hall table within reach. Thread or silk kept on spools gets grimy dusty and the outer layer if soiled, should be discarded.

Sheets which are wearing in the middle should be cut right through the center, the weakest parts should be cut away, and the sheet relaid, with the sides now forming the center. If a sheet is too much worn to be remade it will cut up into towels for glass and china.

An experienced needlewoman suggests a list (which gives the various numbers of needles and cotton) to follow when sewing by hand. She advises a No. 9 needle for 50 and 80 cotton, when hemming and tucking; a No. 8 needle for 50 and 60 cotton for plain sewing, overhauling and overcasting; a No. 7 needle for 40 and 60 thread for gathering. When gathering or working buttonholes rub the thread over with a piece of beeswax. This will keep it from knotting and also help it to resist strain.

For the Housewife.

To remove old putty from window frames pass a red-hot poker slowly over it and the putty will come off easily.

Rust on steel may be treated with a paste made from powdered pumice stone moistened with mineral when it needs to be renovated.

When using bottled bluing the common tendency to pour in too much can be overcome by removing cork and cutting a triangular slit the entire length of cork. Reinsert cork and the bluing will come out very slowly. This saves pulling the cork out each time you have occasion to use the bluing.

Mash your boiled potatoes in the usual way, then add milk or cream enough to make them creamy, and also a pinch of baking powder. Then beat with an egg beater, adding salt last. When ready to serve put a chunk of butter on top. You will say you never tasted lighter or flakier potatoes.

Comparatively few people realize that the gas bill may be very perceptibly reduced by exercising care to light the gas properly. Hold the lighted match to the burner, then slowly turn on the gas. Most people turn the gas on full force, and then apply the match. A slight explosion ensues which affects the meter and sends it rapidly forward.

It is often difficult when you are hanging a heavy picture to get the screw to fasten into the wall, especially when the wall is only plaster. Try this plan: Enlarge the hole, wet the edges well around, fill in with moistened plaster of paris, and screw the nail into the plaster while it is wet. You will find the screw quite firm as soon as plaster is dry.

If a joint of meat should be too underdone to eat and the cold slices have been carved out it can be cooked again and served as a fresh joint if the hole is filled up with batter and the joint is cooked in a brisk oven for an hour. The browned potatoes will be much appreciated and the fact that it is the second time of sending it to table will not be noticed.

Cake Hints.

A good pinch of salt improves any cake.

Half water, instead of milk, makes a lighter cake.

If your cake rises in a mountain in the middle the reason is your dough was too thick.

If it goes down in the middle your dough was too rich, too much sugar.

The cause of a cake's being soggy is too much baking powder.

To sprinkle flour in greased pans prevents cake from sticking.

A pan of water in the bottom of the oven keeps the bottom of a cake from burning.

A paper over the tin keeps the top from burning.

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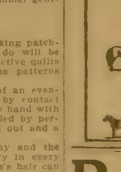

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Ted of the Hills

Or, FIGHTING CATTLE THIEVES

By Annie Brownlee Quimby

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CHAPTER XIV.

COME, boy, and I'll show you where you can get the money. I intended keeping this for a little surprise at Christmas, but I guess this is the time when it will do the most good," Silver said quite mysteriously, and Ted wondered the more.

The old man led the way to the back of the cabin, where a rude shed had been thrown up by slanting four posts in the ground and building a temporary roof over them. Under this were stretched three tiers of heavy gray cotton, about two feet apart.

"There is where the money will come from, boy," the old man cried, stroking the long white beard, his eyes sparkling like a boy's.

"But that belongs to you, Silver," Ted said, drawing back proudly. "I don't want that stuff bad enough to take your ginseng to pay for it." A dawning [illegible] his voice and eyes.

"Listen, boy. I gathered it expressly for you. I don't want it, but I like to putter about in the woods, making believe I am working. It puts in the time, you know. I discovered a patch of ginseng several years ago, and I transplanted some of it just for the sake of experimenting. It has yielded much better than I supposed it would, and the harvesting was a real pleasure.

Ted had a queer gripping sensation about the throat. "But don't you need the money?" he asked a bit timidly, although he were asking something that was none of his business.

"No, boy. I have no use for it. I have more money than I know what to do with," he added, his eyes growing misty, for he now understood Silver's reluctance to accept the gift, and it touched him deeply. "Come, boy, I'll tell you a story that will surprise you, and yet it may not surprise you so much, either." He uttered the last half of the sentence more to himself than to Ted. "Take it, boy, and use it for what we planned; we shall not disappoint me more than I care to confess."

"All right, Silver, I am mighty thankful, I can tell you. So will go a long way towards wiping out the loss of them steers."

"That reminds me," said Silver, "that I started to tell you something and quit, which shows that I am growing old and absent-minded. As I continued, pushing the long white hair back from the broad brow.

"I must be growing old and absent-minded, then, for I forgot, too, that it was that talk about the burl that switched us off," Ted answered with a smile.

"Well, I'll tell it now, before I forget again. I took Topsy and rode around to Jacob's Ladder yesterday. You know that steep rock that butts out almost perpendicularly on the side of Lonesome Hidee, down in the well towards the timber?" Ted nodded. "Well, I call that Jacob's Ladder on account of the steps in it. Some natural, and they were made by hand. I have a fondness for the place on account of the splendid view you get of the surrounding valleys and hills. I had my field glasses along and I thought I'd have a look to see if there were any more steers running about. Pretty soon I noticed two horsemen ride in close under Bear Ridge, on the side next Ghost Hollow. They seemed to be waiting for somebody, so I just waited, too. Presently a man on a big dapple-gray came down the old cow trail into Ghost Hollow, and headed direct for the spot where the other two were waiting. I noticed that the gray gave the other two something that he had across his horse's shoulders. After talking some minutes the dapple-gray man on the gray rode back up the cow trail, while the other two disappeared up Ghost Hollow. Now, I don't see anything, and it might mean a good deal. What do you think, boy?"

"It looks kind of funny, and I was just trying to remember who owns a dapple gray horse in these hills." Ted said, studying for a minute. "There are only two that I have owned around here that I know of. Uncle Edward owns one and Mose Mullen owns the other. If I've said it once I've said it a bay horse, it might have been almost anybody. Was there anything odd about the man on the gray?"

"I couldn't tell, boy. It was too far away, and my eyes aren't very good at the best. Perhaps you can tell when I say you would have recognized them."

"I guess it must have been one of uncle's men that came over to get the boys on the range. But I don't see what they would be doing down there," Ted said, thoughtfully. "I may go over to uncle's tomorrow, and I'll mention it, and see if he sent a man over there. If not, it must be Mose Mullen's men, and Ted's face grew dark, though he hardly knew why.

"No, boy, I should like to know if it meant anything."

An hour later, with a sack of ginseng on the front of his saddle, Ted went whistling along the trail homeward. In his coat pocket was a well-fingered copy of Tennyson's poems, which his strange old friend had loaned him. Ted was passionately fond of Tennyson's beautiful poems, but for some reason the old man had not offered to loan him the book before.

It was late afternoon when Ted came down the trail in sight of his home. A little black pony was hitched to a post in front of the kitchen door.

"Nancy must be visiting mother today," Ted mused as he urged Pirate into a gentle trot. Captain came running down the trail to meet him, uttering little sharp yelps of delight.

"It's me, all right, Cap. Glad to see me, are you?" stooping over to pat the dog's head.

Captain's noisy welcome had attracted Mrs. Morgan and Nancy to the door, and the latter came running down to meet Ted, while Mrs. Morgan returned to her little kitchen, with the light of understanding in her eyes.

"Hello, Ted!" Ted called. "What do you think of Pirate now? Ain't he a dandy?"

"He's sure a beauty, Ted! What a big fellow he is! It must feel something like being on stilts to be perched up there." Nancy answered, running a critically admiring eye over the sleek coat and handsome cream mane.

"Get up and try him," Ted said, holding his hand for a step.

"Not on your life, Ted! I'd be scared to death of him," the girl cried, backing away.

"Don't be silly, Nan; he is as gentle and safe as your own pony."

"Perhaps, but I'd be afraid of him just the same. He is pretty big," she cried.

Ted lifted the sack of ginseng from Pirate's back and laid it on the door-step, but offered no word of explanation concerning it. He would explain it to his mother when they were alone, he thought.

Nancy got her sunbonnet and prepared to leave for home.

"Let's go trout fishing tomorrow, Ted," Nancy called. "I know there is good fishing in the pool in Stoney Hollow. It may be the last chance we'll get before the fall rains set in."

"I'd like to go, Nan, but I don't think I can spare the time," he said according to consider the matter.

"Oh, come on, Ted! I'll go fishing awful bad, and maw won't let me go alone," she pouted.

"Of course not, Nancy," Mrs. Morgan said from [illegible] "I was just thinking the other day that it was time we were having another mess of trout," she said, smiling wisely.

Ted laughed. "How did you know I was just dying to go, mother?" he asked. "But I am afraid I ought not to take the day. There are so many things that I ought to do before the winter rains set in."

"I know, son, but we have just got to have a mess of trout, too, before the rains come."

"I'll be along early, Ted, so be ready," Nancy called, as she turned her pony down the road towards home.

"What in the world have you here, Ted?" Mrs. Morgan said, pointing to the sack on the doorstep.

"That is a donation towards the new house, mother, and will go quite a ways towards the loss of the steers." Ted opened the sack for his mother's inspection.

"Sakes alive! Where did you get it, son? I thought I knew every patch of ginseng for miles around, but this must have been gathered some time ago, for it is almost dry enough to sell." She scanned his face curiously. "Does it really belong to you, Ted?"

"Yes, it's really mine, mother. Old Silver gave it to me, and when he did it for the sake of passing the time, but I'm sure he did it to help cover the loss of the steers," he cried.

"Well, well!" Mrs. Morgan cried. "And I thought I knew every patch of ginseng in these mountains for miles around," she complained. "Where did he get it, I wonder?"

Mrs. Morgan's hobbies were ginseng and rare mosses and medicinal herbs. The idea that a feeble old man should know what she did not, grieved her. It was not that she wished to appropriate all the riches so lavishly spread throughout the valleys and woods, but the idea of being outdone was bitter to her soul, but only for a minute.

"He was telling me about having transplanted a patch as an experiment some years ago," Ted explained. "I don't think he said where, but likely to be somewhere near his cabin."

"But, Ted, dear, I don't feel right about taking that from your old friend. That sackful will bring a lot of money, and he may need it," she said, with her usual thought for others.

"I thought of that, too, mother, but he insisted on my taking it. I think he must have plenty of money."

"What a peculiar old man!" the mother mused.

"He came up here—let me see, it must be about eleven years ago—and during all that time I have never even seen him. Your old friend must be a woman-hater, Ted. He shuns the sex

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as though they were serpents. A strange man, surely," she said, dreamily.

For several minutes neither spoke, and the woman's mind wandered away to a big house in a great city. She was an affluent old house and a beggar's cot-in the library, and the walls were lined tage; between wealth and poverty. Do with books from ceiling to floor. Before her stood a white-haired old man in bitter anger. "You must choose between this maiden and me; between this wigwam and the splendor of your father," she heard herself saying. "I prefer the cottage and the man I love." Then with a sigh she came back to the present. "I don't know why it is, Ted, but whenever I think of that strange old friend of yours it has to carry me back to my girlhood days, to memories I have striven for nineteen years to forget. It must be because he comes from a world that I knew in my youth," she said, with a tired sigh. "It was your considerate act, kind of my old friend to do this, Ted. I hope you thanked him properly?"

"I told to mother, but he would have me believe I was doing him a favor in taking it away; and that the pleasure he had derived from harvesting it had amply repaid him."

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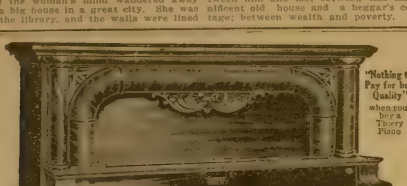
Ted explained the old man's plan concerning the cabin as a future site for the new home, and Mrs. Morgan approved of them. The discussion lasted till the little clock in the kitchen struck ten. Then Ted, tired but happy, climbed the ladder to his bed in the loft, while Mrs. Morgan retired to her couch in the adjoining room.

She dreamed that night of the strange old man and the handsome home, the beautiful new home that she had planned for so many years, and that was now about to be her—



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you hear? You must choose, and you must do it at once." The voice was cold and decisive, and the anger on the face was terrible. "I have chosen, father," she heard herself saying. "I prefer the cottage and the man I love." Then with a sigh she came back to the present. "I don't know why it is, Ted, but whenever I think of that strange old friend of yours it has to carry me back to my girlhood days, to memories I have striven for nineteen years to forget. It must be because he comes from a world that I knew in my youth," she said, with a tired sigh. "It was your considerate act, kind of my old friend to do this, Ted. I hope you thanked him properly?"

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CHAPTER XV.

THE next morning Ted was up before the sun showed by the ruddy rays of the sun were tipping the tops of the trees on Lonesome he was ready to start for the cabin.

"Ready, Ted?" Nancy called from the yard, where her black pony was pawing the ground impatiently. Ted looked out on one side of him and a fire-blackened coffee bucket dangling from the other. Nancy made a picture as she sat astride her black pony. A calico sunbonnet was tied over the dark, fluffy hair, and the cheeks and the full throat were of dark brown stuff. Her face and hands were tanned brown, and her cheeks and lips were the hue of ripe apples.

Ted and Mrs. Morgan each admired Nancy, but each admired her in a different way.

Mrs. Morgan admired her for her fresh, unspoiled girlhood, and the wildflower beauty of face and form. Her mind was clean and her soul was pure; and the woman's heart in the woman drew her towards the girl, for those all too rare qualities. Perhaps the tie that bound them closest was the girl's frank admiration for Ted. To Nancy Ted was the embodiment of all virtues, school and college. Ted and his mother was bound to respect the girl's judgment and good taste.

Ted, who was mounted upon Pirate, with fishing tackle slung across his back and a can of worms in one hand. A pistol hung from one side and a hunting knife on the other.

"Did you bring your rifle along, Nancy?" Ted asked. "They say the panthers and bears are getting pretty thick."

"Sure!" she answered, and touched a bulge in her waist front. "Mother was worry herself sick if I went without it. Since I was a little tiny with that wildcat mother is afraid to let me out of her sight, unless I am armed like a Sioux Indian or the warpath," she laughed.

"And your aim is quite right, Nancy, dear. There are many wild and vicious things in these hills besides wildcats," Ted said smilingly.

"I tell mother not to worry. I can take care of myself, whether it be man or beast," the girl replied, with a laugh, a trifle boastfully. The girl caught the glint of his eye and her face reddened. "You see that little apple on the top of that tree, Ted? Just watch me split it in two." She held the revolver at arm's length and fired. The apple fell to the ground as though split with a hatchet.

"Well done, Nancy." Ted cried admiringly. "I didn't think you could do it."

"You're a pretty true shot, Nancy. I reckon you can take care of yourself," said Mrs. Morgan with a smile and nod of approval.

"I wasn't reared in the hills for nothin'. Mother says Nature made a mistake when I was created a girl, Nancy said, and they all laughed.

"I may run over and see Aunt Margaret, and get her to help me with that waist pattern. So, if I'm not here when you get back, you'll know where I am, Ted."

"All right, mother," Ted called over his shoulder as he rode away.

Mrs. Morgan stood in the doorway and watched them going down the trail. They looked back and waved her a farewell, then were hidden from view by the bushes along the trail.

"What a good-looking pair they are!" she mused. "And she just worships Ted, I can see that; and he thinks she is perfect, and he isn't far astray, Nancy is as good as she is pretty. I suppose they will marry some day, and if there should be little Nancys and Teds I would then be a grandmother." Her lips curved into a tender smile, and a light that was almost divine lit her face. "There isn't another girl in the hills that I could give Ted to. Nancy's people are only common people, I'll admit, but they are much superior to the general run of humanity in these hills. They have a little education and there is more refinement about them. She will always live in the hills, I suppose, and perhaps it is best so," she said musingly. "I hardly think he would care for the city, after the free and untrammeled life of the country. Ted has not been educated for a business career, and perhaps for his own happiness and peace of mind, it is best that he has not. The glare and bustle and activity of a great city would craze the boy after the peace and quiet of the hills. After all, the city has nothing to offer him that he cannot get tenfold here. Yes, undoubtedly, Ted will remain in the hills," she murmured with a nod of satisfaction.

Just then Captain came trotting down the trail towards the cabin his head drooping and his tail between his legs, and dropped forlornly on the steps at her feet.

"Did they send you home, Captain dear?" she asked, gently stroking the dog's head. "You wouldn't be afraid of bear or panther and there is no telling what might happen."

Captain raised his big soft eyes to her face for a minute and slowly wagged his tail, then laid his head between his paws and went to sleep.

Ted and Nancy walked their horses slowly along the trail, for the morning was too lovely to hurry. The birds were singing as though they would burst their little throats for joy. A squirrel scolded and a chipmunk chattered as they passed. It was an hour of peace and beauty, too precious to be passed with undue haste. The girl was in her blushing face clear of Bear Ridge, and was sending little inquisitive glances into the rugged face of the youth riding silently along for some minutes when Nancy suddenly asked:

"Ted, I wonder what's beyond the farthest hill, Ted?"

"Yes, sometimes I do. But I know pretty well. Beyond the mountains to the west is the Pacific Ocean, to the north is Eureka, to the east are hills and valleys, and to the south is Milwaukee, miles and miles, and to the south is San Francisco and the Golden Gate. I know that, at least," he said, smiling down at her.

"Anyone who has ever gone to school knows that already," she replied, with a toss of the air.

"But I mean away beyond the very farthest hill. I mean the countries beyond the seas. The people beyond Eureka; away to the cold, snowclad country of the North, and even beyond San Francisco and the Golden Gate," she said, a strangely faraway look in her eyes, as though she would pierce the distance and see what lay beyond.

"Yes, I sometimes think I would like to see beyond the very last hill. But I have a pretty good idea what I would see—more hills and more hills and valleys, and fields of grain and potatoes and acres of orchard and then a valley of green grass and cows and then perhaps a little town or village; then more fields of grain and potatoes and orchards and pastures, and another little town; then more fields and ranch-houses and maybe a city, with the houses all huddled together like cattle in a corral before shipping day; then, perhaps, we'd see a big body of water with a steam pipe sticking out on top, running along the ground on iron rails. That's what they call 'train,'" he said, with mock seriousness. "I saw one in Eureka, you know.

"The people in the cities dress up and look wise, and pretend they are the whole thing, when the half of 'em wouldn't know how to bread a steer or feed the chickens. When the other fellow roped them for 'em they would never get on in the city, would they?" she asked.

"No. Those automobiles they have now would scare any respectable horse to death. Pirate and Jim wouldn't stand them a minute. Horses have a grudge against those things, you know."

CHAPTER XVI.

BEAR CREEK cut through Sleepy Hollow about three miles from the Morgan cabin on Bear Ridge. That is, if you followed the old cow trail across Bear Ridge and through the Chasm of Gulch and over the next ridge into Sleepy

hollow. If you followed the road, it would be almost five miles, as the road led by a circuitous route around the rim of Bear Ridge, to a point where it could descend in a gradual slope into Short Gulch. But for years this wagon road has been discarded for a better and shorter road. Yet, the old road was in good condition, and the winter rains seemed to have damaged it very little. The grass grew thick along the old road, and Ted noticed where the trail crossed the road that the grass was crushed as though by travel, but thought nothing of it at the time. Where the cow trail crossed the road, Bear Creek ran parallel with the latter for a couple of hundred feet, before branching off into the hills again. Between the road and the creek was a thick growth of alder bushes and young tamaracks, perhaps twenty feet wide, which completely hid the one from the other. It was on the creek side of this thicket that Ted tied Pirate and Jim.

The pool was deep and shady, and the trout were biting well. Nancy had fourteen speckled beauties on her string when she threw down her pole.

"How many have you got, Ted?" she called to where Ted was sitting a little farther up stream.

"Eleven," was the reply.

"I've beat you, then. I've got fourteen," she called back laughingly. "Let's have something to eat, Ted. I'm starving."

"So am I," Ted answered, throwing his rod on the bank.

Nancy got the coffee bucket and parboil filled it with water from the creek, built a fire and made a hole in the sand by the side of the creek. Gathering a few dry twigs and leaves, he soon had a dandy fire. He took a stout stick and running it through the handle of the coffee bucket, held it over the fire until the minute the coffee was boiling, and the lunch was spread in a shady nook. Ted beat out the remains of the fire and filled the hole with wet sand, for every leaf and twig was dry as tinder. A spark might do inestimable damage and no danger could be too great for the settlers. So Ted was exceedingly cautious.

After the cold chicken and jelly and cake had been disposed of, Ted stretched himself lazily on the ground, while Nancy emptied the coffee bucket and packed the remains of the lunch in it so they could have it before starting home. Finally Ted got his ear to the ground in a listening attitude and motioned Nancy to remain quiet.

"What is it, Ted? Is it a panther?" she asked, a little excited catch in her voice.

"Sssh! speak easy. It's cattle, I think. But what the dickens brings them up this old road?"

"I may be stolen cattle, Ted," and the other nodded. "Get in behind that bunch of alders, Nancy. I'm going to ride through here and get a look at them, anyway. I hope Pirate won't give us away."

A sound as of the tramp of many hoofs came nearer and nearer. Then occasionally a man's voice would ring out, urging them on. Ted crouched among the alders and watched the old road. A curious, strained look crept into Ted's face, but he beckoned Nancy to crouch low. A low moo here and there went through the herd, and then they had passed out of sight. Ted crept back to where Nancy still crouched behind the alders.

"What was it, Ted?" she asked eagerly, seeing by his face that he was excited.

"Yes, my steers," he cried, trying to control his eagerness.

"Are you sure, Ted? Cattle look a good deal alike, you know."

"They are my steers, I tell you. Why, I know every hair on their bodies."

"What are you goin' to do about it, then?" she asked hastily.

"I hardly know what to do," Ted replied, thinking hard. "I've got to keep track of them, now that I have found them," he said forgetting his grammar in the excitement.

Just then there was loud bawling of cattle farther up the creek which was answered by the herd that had just passed. Ted seemed to have come to a decision, turned from the road in towards the creek.

"There must be more cattle up there," Ted said. "That bunch seems headed over yonder. I'd better make sure about them," he continued, starting to follow up the creek.

"Let me go, too, Ted. I don't want to stay here alone," she begged.

"All right, but you'll have to be mighty quiet or they may hear us."

Hand in hand they crept up the edge of the creek, keeping under cover as much as possible. From the top of a ridge they got a view of an old clearing, with a dilapidated cabin standing near the creek. The cattle that Ted saw coming up the old road were bunched together on one side of the clearing, and guarding them, two men, a little from a gulch on the other side a stream of cattle was pouring into the clearing. Two men near the cabin had a fire in an old tin pan.

"Isn't that Indian Ike's place?" Nancy asked curiously.

Ted nodded.

"That's Ike on that buckskin pony near the old cabin. I thought he had left the hills for good. It's two years since he and old Ellen left here."

"I had no idea we had come so far, Ted. Why, we're miles away from home," said Nancy with a little apprehensive shiver.

"Yes, we came a good way, but the best fishing is up here, where they are seldom bothered."

"See, they are going to brand the cattle," Nancy cried excitedly. "They are heating the irons."

The boy ground his teeth, and a look that boded ill for the rustlers settled over his face.

"I've got to stay here and watch them thieves, Nan. Don't you think you could take Pirate and ride to Uncle Edward's for help? We've just got to catch them thieves and get the cattle back," he said determinedly.

"Why can't I go on Jim? He could make it in an hour."

"I know, but I'm afraid to have Pirate here. If there are any mares around he is sure to make a noise."

"I'll try, Ted; but I'm awfully afraid."

"Pshaw! There is nothin' to be afraid of. Come, and I'll put you up."

They crept back to where the big chestnut was tied to a sapling. His head was in the air and he was beginning to show unmistakable signs of uneasiness.

"You're well armed, Ted?" she asked anxiously.

"Yes, I've lead enough for the whole bunch, if it comes to that," he replied grimly.

Nancy got astride of the big stallion and carefully tucked her skirts about her legs, that they might not irritate him. She was quivering in every limb, but determined to carry out her part.

"Be careful, Nan," Ted said wistfully, leaning out of the saddle to touch his forehead with her lips. "Remember these men are not men, so don't take any chances. You can depend on my being back as quick as Pirate can bring me."

Just then a shrill neigh came from the clearing. In an instant Pirate's head was in the air, and before Nancy could lay a restraining hand upon him he had answered with that piercing whistle-like call of his.

"Hurry, Nancy!" Ted cried. "They may have heard him, and might come to have a look. If he gets restive just pat his neck and speak low and gentle and he'll quiet down right away."

Nancy gently touched her heels down the trail and started off at an easy gait, that the thud of his hoofs might not be heard by the rustlers. Once out of Sleepy Hollow, she let Pirate out and gently urged him on. He responded nobly. The rocks flew by with railway speed. She lay low in the saddle and caught her breath in gasps, and still Pirate ran like the wind. His heart beat. A blur of black pony and white hair and beard flashed by. "That must be Silver," Nancy thought. "I wonder what he's doing up here? Hope he don't run into the cattle thieves."

Her fondness of the big horse had worn away, and in its place was a fierce wild joy and pride in the noble beast. The rush of the mountain air was exhilarating, and the breeze created by the tremendous speed caused the heat from the day's trail to become bearable warmth. Up hill and down hill and through gulches they went, following a cut-off trail that was sometimes almost impassable and perilously narrow. The spirit of the run had got into Pirate's veins. He seemed to understand that something unusual was expected of him, and was determined to come up to expectations. They were drawing near the Morgan ranch, but Pirate was still breathing easily and his pace never slackened. "What a horse!" the girl cried in admiration. "What a horse! I shall love you always for this, Pirate." Then thoughts of Ted rushed through her brain. Would they find Ted? And if they did, what then? The thought made her urge Pirate to greater speed. The trail came out upon a wagon road that ran past Ed Morgan's ranch and Pirate turned into the road with lightning speed. The pounding of his hoofs sounded like distant thunder, and brought Morgan's men running to the yard to see what was the matter. At first they could only make out a dark object flying towards them, but as he turned in at the gate Pete cried: "It's Ted's Pirate!"

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* * *

Contradictory.

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At one house the man of the house was expressing his appreciation of the sermon in complimentary terms while assisting the minister to put up his team. His little son had followed him, and after eying the minister a minute or two exclaimed:

"Why, papa, you said he was a one-hoss preacher, and he's got two hosses!"

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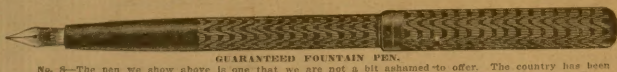

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For Scotland's Queen.

(Continued from page six.)

laisy?" I demanded. "How far have you gone in your murderous treachery?"

"I am not a traitor."

"An angel then, forsooth."

"Neither am I an angel."

"But a minion of the Queen's."

His eyes seemed to get new light.

Was he trying to hold me till Captain Comas should come?

"Tell me! Out with it all!" I went on, never for a moment taking my eyes from his repulsive face. "This time there is no river to spew you out. You are the Queen's spy!"

"And because you think I am you are going to slay me?"

"Why should I hold back the Tournay blade? Self-preservation, the wise say, is the first law of nature. Confess. You slew Lancaster and Montjoy!"

"I did."

"You had your dagger pointed toward Sussex's heart when I pulled you from your perch?"

"Why not?"

"You would not have spared the gentle mistress of Penhurst House in your blood lust."

"I love Lady Elenora—"

He got no further for his hateful declaration, for I caused his bones to chatter like castanets.

"Breathe not her name again and I'll leave you dead where you sit," I continued. "Now, go back to your cot. Leave your dagger where it lies. I will extinguish the light."

"And wait for the Captain when he comes?"

"Yes, like a lion in ambush."

Quasimodo hesitated, but I took him by his hump and urged him to his corner, flung him upon his pallet.

"One word, one squeak," cried I, "and the Tournay blade will find the most villainous target it ever sought."

He fell into a trembling silence. I tiptoed to the table and blew out the taper. Then I stationed myself near the couch and waited. Minutes seemed hours. I heard the winter wind moan at the window and now and then an oath on the pave outside. Would Captain Comas never come?

Never before in my life had I been so terribly situated. The very plot to save the Queen of Scotland trembled in the balance of fate. And whilst I stood there in the gloom the sweet face of Lady Elenora came before me, and I saw her hands outstretched in a gesture of help. Suddenly I heard a door open in the old house. I leaned toward the couch and found Quasimodo's mouth in the darkness. My hand covered it vengefully. In another moment I would come face to face with Captain Comas. In another minute a sword or a dagger would find my hand was lifted to slay Quasimodo's face, and I stood erect, breathlessly, but with my whole body ready for action.

Next week's Ledger will contain further chapters of this remarkable story. You will miss a great treat if you do not read it to the end. We will give you constantly the very best stories of entertainment that money will buy, so send in your subscription and take the Ledger regularly, if you are not doing so. You will not regret it.

* * *

The Biddlestone Mystery.

Continued from page eleven.)

"Poor father!" she sobbed, and Bianca, her head bowed in the grief of this new-found cousin, of whom she would never again be jealous and who was to become her friend, placed her arms around June and led her to the front chamber in Joshua's house, where her father awaited her coming.

Peter, left alone with Joshua Biddlestone, found something more to say.

He explained how they had, the evening and told of the dead bodies in the temple of Da-Pou-Jan.

"There are the four priests of India who were pursuing Joseph. He has told me that they have been hidden in the house for several days, trying to persuade him to give up the plunder, and their threats had driven him to frenzy. I suppose they were trying to clear the house of all intruders before making a search for it. There are only Jehan and Akbar left, but Joseph has told me that generations of priests will pursue the Biddlestones until the treasure is given up. Joseph has also confessed to me where it is hidden—within the pedestal of one of the dragon lamps on the circular staircase. The treasure consists of jewels—priceless ones. John will take them back to India with him and remove the curse from our house. I must go now to my brother-in-law and say farewell! I cared for him many years, rather than trust him to strangers, and of course, my wife and daughter will make their home here. Joseph was a very rich man and they will have ample means. As for me," he smiled in a melancholy way, "I will remember Hagar and her girl. Come, Peter Cable, lead the way—and, let me lean on your shoulder—you are the sort of son I should have had if I married. See, the sun is shining through the windows of it is day—and I hope the sunshine is an augury that the clouds will depart from Biddlestone Hall forever!"

Peter Cable paused in the bay window on a stair landing and looked down into a sun-enriched rose-garden.

In fancy he saw himself walking with June—June, his wife—and when the year rolled around and the month of June came the fancy became a fact.

The End.

* * *

SHE WAS YOUNG.

Little girl of 22,
Much too young you are for loving.
I am old—I'm 28—yet
Have a heart which through and through
Darts will Cupid soon be shoving.
Since what can your love's tale repeated,
Why not then your love's tale repeated,
Why not then your love now tell?
That—
Noble men are so conceited!

Little girl of 22,
That is true and I deplore it.
You're so young that such a view
Causes me to wonder who
Placed the curls and wore it
In your presence like a cloak.
Modest you are, you cannot dim it,
Such so mine is—
That's a joke!
Candidly, you are the limit!"

Little girl of 22,
You are truly enigmatic.
Let me ask you—
"What will do.
It is time to take your cue
And I'll make it quite emphatic.
Who's coming with me?" (Low)
Of the lot by whom I'm hurried.
Young, and old, and my first
Husband I divorced and—married!"

* * *

Horrid Uncle.

A certain charming young thing of this town has an uncle of whom she has always been, and still is, very fond; but just at present she is convinced that he is as catty as any woman she's ever known.

She tells the story herself:

"Listen. You know I have always had an excessive affection for Uncle Dick, and have confided almost all to him everything—absolutely everything.

"Now, the fact that I have had so much trouble with—well, you know with whom—has never been a joke to me. Last year, when that affair with Tom was on, I wrote, of course, to Uncle Dick about it—Uncle was then in the West. Now, since he always liked Tom, he wrote me a beautiful letter, offering me all manner of felicitations and wishes for a bright and prosperous future. I treasured that letter from Uncle Dick.

"Now, it isn't necessary for me to refer to my disappointment in Tom—his behavior justified any action on my part. I know that people say I threw him over and all that sort of thing, but, honestly, there was only one thing to do, and of course I did it.

"Well, I suppose it did seem a little startling to Uncle Dick, when a little over two months since the writing of his first letter he received another from me, telling him of my engagement to Harry. But Uncle was terribly nice about it. He approved of my course in the matter, and though he did prefer Tom to anybody else. And I couldn't complain of the letter Uncle sent me in reply to the second. It was just as nice as his first, although he did give a hint of surprise.

"It was afterward that Uncle Dick showed himself most objectionable. Two weeks ago, when I found that, after all was said and done, he was really Clarence that I loved, I got a third letter from Uncle Dick—the brute! After acknowledging the receipt of my announcement he went on to say:

"'Permit me, my dear, to congratulate you on your approaching marriage to——'

"Then he inserted one of those star signs (what do you call them—asterisks?), and added in a footnote: 'Here insert the name of the happy man!'"

* * *

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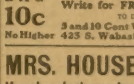

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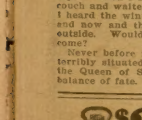

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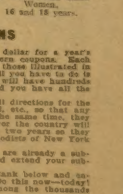

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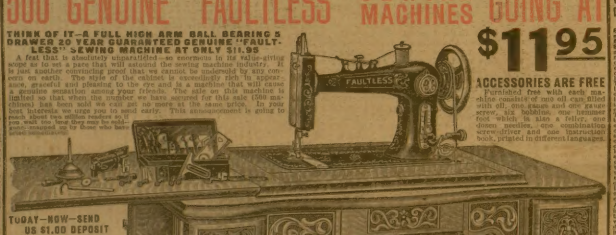

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